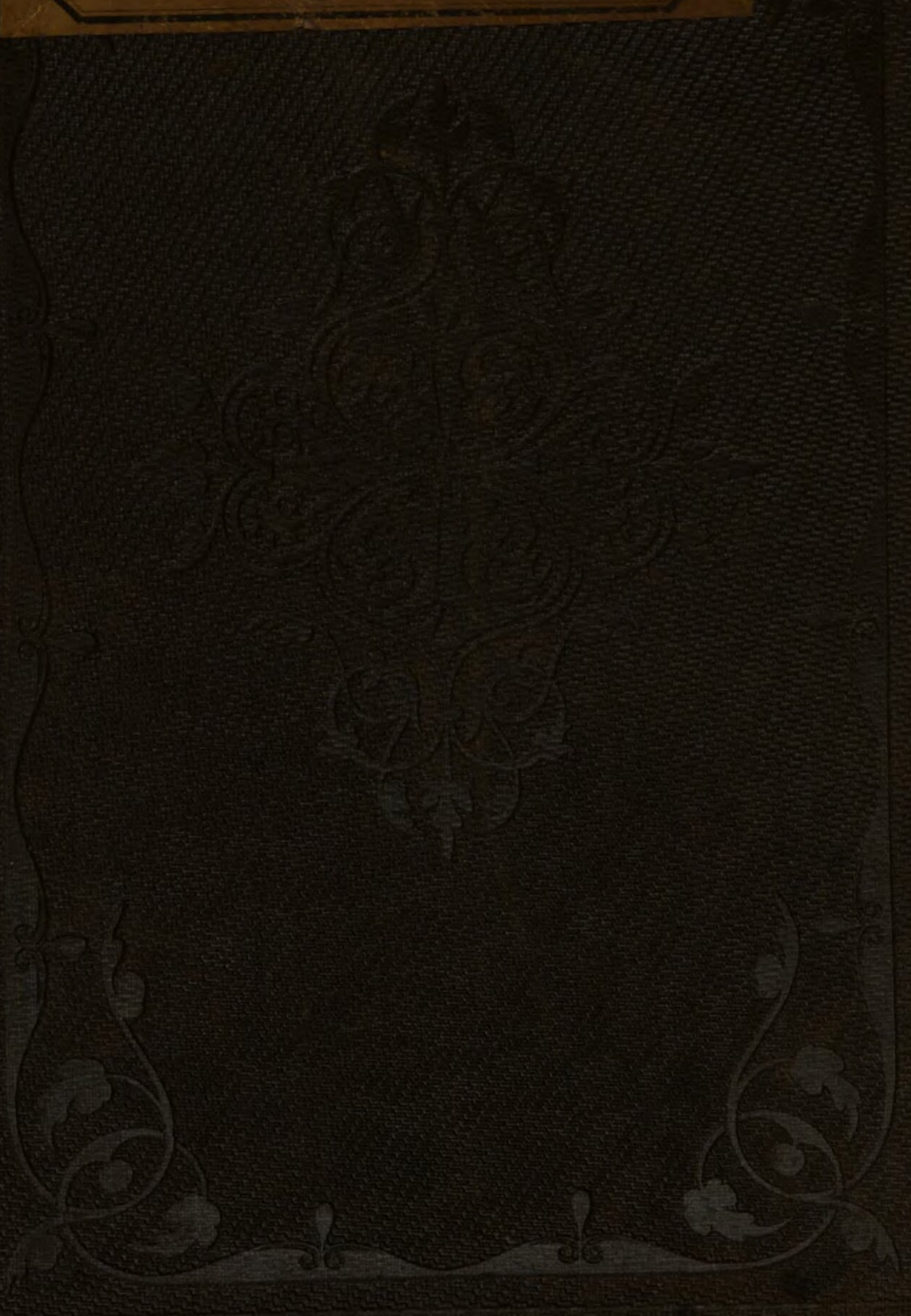


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Castellamonte.

CASTELLAMONTE;

AN

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Illustrative of Italian Life

DURING

THE INSURRECTION OF 1831.

'Tis to live again, remeasuring
Youth's years, like a scene rehearsed ;
In thy second lifetime treasuring
Knowledge from the first.
Hast thou felt, poor self-deceiver,
Life's career so void of pain,
As to wish its fitful fever
New begun again ?

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CHARLES WESTERTON,

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CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MARCH.....	page 1
----------------	--------

CHAPTER XV.

THE SKIRMISH	35
--------------------	----

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HERALD	81
------------------	----

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BIVOUAC	120
-------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

CATCHING A BISHOP.....	143
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIX.

DOUBTS AND MISGIVINGS	171
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XX.

THE SPY	196
---------------	-----

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COUP-DE-MAIN	234
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LAST WATCH	252
----------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIII.

PARTING	page 281
---------------	----------

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE FORD	314
----------------	-----

CHAPTER XXV.

FAREWELL	367
----------------	-----

CASTELLAMONTE,

&c.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MARCH.

“Arm ! arm ! it is—it is—the cannon’s opening roar !”

I ARRIVED at last at my father’s house. I found our good people plunged into their genial slumbers, to which they had abandoned themselves, after having sat up till late at night in the vain hope that I might sooner or later remember that I had a home.

I crossed the court-yard, and paid my first visit to the stable.

Reduced as he had for some time been in his domestic circumstances, my father thought he owed it to his military rank to indulge in the expense of a charger. A saddle-horse there had always been in our otherwise empty stable, though of late, the

old gentleman was seldom inclined to ride, and the duty of giving his steed sufficient exercise devolved upon myself. I looked upon this circumstance as peculiarly fortunate in the present juncture, as I thought that half the poetry of war was in the horse.

My proud grey was the only being awake in the house. So I walked up to him, led him out of his stall, patted his long neck, saddled and bridled him with my own hand, and mounted.

The fine animal, none the worse for those few weeks of comparative inaction to which my imprisonment had condemned him, bounded gaily and wantonly under his well-known young rider, and as, except in cases of particular business, there was a compact between man and horse, that the latter should have his own way, the good creature would almost by instinct have taken the well-known road to Guardasone; but we found the town gate still closed, and I thwarted his intentions, so far as to turn him to the right, and set him at an easy canter on the fine promenadewhich we call *Lo Stradone*.

There was not a soul to be seen. I was alone with my horse and the sun, which

began to rise from the east, in all the splendour and gorgeousness that could well befit the “dawn of Italian liberty.” Alas! from the first insurrectional movement at Bologna to the final extinction of our hopes, the Italian sun was alone true to his charge. Never since time immemorial had such a set of bright, calm, balmy days been enjoyed in Lombardy, during the earliest spring months, as we beheld in February and March, 1831. It seemed as if the laws that preside over the vicissitudes of the seasons had been providentially suspended, that the Heavens might look undisturbed upon the noblest spectacle that the earth can offer to its Creator—the redemption and renovation of a fallen race.

Alone with God I was; and penetrated with the solemnity of the hour, I reined in my horse, threw myself from the saddle and knelt, and loudly and fervently, and with as much faith and ardour as all the faculties of my soul could inspire—prayed to Him—that my country’s hope might be no illusion; that it might please Him in His omnipotence to say, “Let there be an Italy!”

Alas! but His designs are inscrutable;

not to be hastened or averted by human supplications.

There was nothing absurd or affected in my mood at the time. I look back with pride and envy on my own heart of that day; for God saw it, and knows there was no meanness or selfishness in it, no afterthought, no alloy of earthly desire. The warriors of the cross, who alighted from their coursers in sight of Jerusalem, were not more pious and earnest in their thanksgiving to Providence, who had led them safe and victorious to the goal of all their toils and sufferings; poor Don Quixote was not more sublimely serious, when he stood sword in hand before the lion's cage, in the full confidence that love and devotion could bear him through the unequal combat. There was love in my heart, too, sincere, anxious, immeasurable love for my country, and it is in the nature of all love to turn to God as to its fountain.

Not many hours afterwards I was seated at breakfast with the few that constituted my family circle. The only stranger present was Pippo Galli, my stout-hearted armourer.

The greetings and congratulations being all over, all having been told and retold respecting the particulars of our imprisonment, and the great incidents of the revolution, I turned rather abruptly to my father and asked him "what had become of his sword."

Seeing, however, that the old gentleman, though he did not openly refuse, still showed some repugnance to part with a weapon which he had wielded with honour for so many years, and which he entertained some trust of having still sufficient vigour left to unsheath, at least for the defence of the town walls, I abandoned the idea of bringing an hereditary claymore into the field, and went with Galli to his father's workshop, to look for my implements of war.

There, in the midst of a thousand specimens of ancient and modern, home and foreign manufacture, I made choice of an old-fashioned, rusty, ponderous falchion, the blade of which, for aught I knew to the contrary, might have been forged by some of the smiths who made the Milan plate-armour famous throughout Europe. It was

such an instrument as few men of the present day would choose to encumber themselves with. But my long and constant practice of fencing, and a certain restless combativeness by which it seemed as if my very soul had settled in the muscles of my right arm, had given it uncommon elasticity and strength, steeled and inured it to the most severe exercises. Relying, therefore, on this bodily advantage, of which I was not a little vain, and accustomed, with the majority of my countrymen, to attach an almost superstitious veneration to everything ancient, I set my heart at once on the broad-hilted scimitar, and drawing it fiercely, I flourished it about with such a masterly ease, that my friend the armourer's foreman, himself a very powerful man and an admirer of manly feats, laid his hand on my shoulder with a half-patronising, half-sympathising air, and exclaimed: "I think that will suit, my good fellow."

The name of the artificer, "Oderisi da Brescia," was engraven on the blade; and having, guided by the same instinct, made choice of a huge pair of holster pistols by "Lazzarino Cominazzo," newly set and

provided with percussion locks, I could hardly help thinking that nothing remained but to don one of the ancient corslets and helmets that hung round the shop, to complete Cervantes' description of his hero's equipment, when the valiant knight let his trusty weapon fall on his pasteboard helmet, to prove at one time the temper of his head-piece, and the might of his arm; for the similarity between myself and that doughty redresser of wrongs, obtruded itself upon me every moment, in my very spite, and however wrathful I may have been against the cruel fair satirist who first gave me a sly hint of the resemblance.

Well, I met my sister Louisa on the threshold of our apartments, as I exultingly brought home those spoils of by-gone ages. The loving girl who on my first mentioning sharp-edged tools at the breakfast table, had turned pale, stood now in my way, with tears and remonstrances, wondering "how so severe a visitation as I had lately undergone had not brought me to my senses, and why I could not leave the throat-cutting trade of war to the soldiers who were paid for it."

For the selfishness of private affection is inconceivably intense in countries long deprived of public life—that second-hand selfishness which transfers itself from the individual to the family—which circumscribes the world within the narrow limit of a home, and would not hesitate to prop up its roof with the very poles of the earth, which makes of that home an ark, and only thinks how to float it in the midst of the universal havoc and desolation of the flood.

“Get out of my way, you silly girl!” I cried; and then turning to Galli, who followed close upon my footsteps: “You must not mind a little April shower,” I said; “it is all sham, I assure you. The Castellamonte, both males and females, have pretty stout hearts in their bosoms, hearts that may melt, but cannot break.”

“Speak for yourself, sir,” retorted the girl, pettishly, for she was not proof against that appeal to family pride. “Uncle says it: this revolutionary bubble will soon burst, and none but fools would commit themselves on such chances.”

“Quote not our uncle to me, sweet sister,” said I. “The professor-chancellor is one of

those men for whom Dante has no place either in heaven or the other place. For myself, I am already committed past retrieve. I may say with that wicked cardinal whom the same poet buried in a fiery tomb : ‘If men have a soul, I have lost mine for Italy;’ and now run for your scissors and needles. I want a sword-knot, and it shall be tied on by no other hand than thy own tiny white one.”

How great and manifold are love’s resources; how great the ascendancy that affection gives us over devoted and innocent souls. Not only did I with these and other words dry up the girl’s tears and laugh her out of her terrors, but brought her even to handle those formidable engines of destruction; and she was soon cutting up and twining red, green, and white ribbons, the freshness and gloss of which contrasted strangely with the faded lustre of the brass hilt they were meant to adorn.

Thus equipped, with my great *Durindana* dangling at my heels, and Galli’s dagger stuck in my belt—the famous dagger which had already been so strangely fleshed

at my own expense—I strode gallantly out of doors, unconscious myself of all there was absurd and preposterous in my accoutrement, and scarcely attracting the attention of the passers-by, the great majority of whom gingled, rattled, and clattered, equally decked out as stage heroes.

The streets were considerably more crowded than I ever remembered having seen them, both on account of the influx of strangers from the country and the neighbouring towns, and in consequence also of that vague curiosity and disquietude which allowed no man to rest tranquilly under his roof.

The revolution at Parma, as such events unfailingly do in idle Italy, had assumed the aspect of a universal holiday. There was a general meeting, congratulating, fraternizing, and asking for news. Public curiosity was perpetually on the stretch, and there was no lack of charitable persons liberally administering to it. The strangest rumours were afloat. Piedmontese and Neapolitan insurrections, gigantic battles on the Vistula, descent of French and English squadrons on the coasts of Romagna, with

a hundred similar announcements, portending good or evil to what many began to think a premature and precarious movement, very much like a *faux pas*, were received and communicated with the most indiscriminate alacrity. The biggest lies had the longest run. Camels were swallowed, and gnats not strained at. Every post-chaise was arrested. French *commis-voyageurs* and English tourists found themselves closely encompassed and questioned by the active newsmongers. What would they not invent to get rid of the importunity? Blessed days of equality were those: no introduction required to step up to the first comer, take hold of his buttons and pump him. An eternal "What's the news?" had superseded the everlasting "How d'ye do?" A crowd was waiting for birds of passage at the five town gates; a crowd under the portico of the Town Hall, a crowd on the vestibule of the palace. In the streets, in the squares, everywhere but in the churches, there was a crowd. Wherever two friends met and shook hands, the idlers clustered round like bees, with staring

eyes, with gaping mouths, with noses every one of them cocked up in the air, in the shape of a mark of interrogation.

Then there was drumming, parading, and mustering. The stray companies of the first national battalions, the embryo of a horse regiment, gendarmes, *douaniers*, firemen, all went about tramping; then oh! the thumping, braying, shrieking, squeaking of tympani, clarions, and fifes. Even the boys of the lowest classes—the *birichini*, as they are named in our parts of the country,—ranked themselves into a juvenile militia, and marched in as good and steady an order as their elders, with broomsticks instead of guns, rattles by way of drums, their colonels mounted on stilts, and the arms of their parish or ward at their head, with flags bearing the inscription “Battalion of Hope!” or “Elèves of the National Guard!”

To this inquisitive and military ardour was added a new benevolent spirit, which went by the name of *fraternization*. Besides greeting and hallooing each other with a hail-fellow-well-met familiarity, which would have been sheer impudence in soberer times, another far more disgusting practice pre-

vailed—the worst of all brotherly abominations,—my townspeople were all seized with a fit of kissing.

Kissing, if confined to the proper object for which it was originally instituted, is at once a sacred and a genial ceremony, a mystic, magic language, of which the heart alone has the grammar and dictionary.

Young ladies who are indulgently supposed not to know the whole extent of its meaning, are apt to abuse it *à l'outrance*, especially when their sportive billing is not altogether supposed to be void of effect on the hearts of susceptible beholders.

With kissing girls, so they be pretty, and know how to manage it prettily, few of the sternest moralists will be disposed to quarrel.

But, gracious goodness ! what shall we say of kissing men ? that men, after the example of Judas Iscariot, should still join lips—still bear the contact of each other's moustaches or whiskers ! that they should throw their arms round each other's neck, except for the purpose of wrestling !

Oh ! sensible, honest, manly John Bull ! wring my hand till it bleeds at the nails ;

shake my arm till it gets out of joint, but keep any man's face at arm's length from mine !

The act had always something degrading in my eyes, and I was glad to see the custom never truly indigenous in Italy, dying off with all other transalpine affectations imported amongst the evils of the late French invasion. The French are the kissing nation, *par excellence* : and from the time of the famous *Baiser de Lamourette*, down to the startling *émeute* of July, then so fresh in men's minds, every political event has invariably been signalized in that osculatory country by a prodigious waste of hugging and bussing.

Our revolutionary heroes in Italy, whose main fault consisted in a blind imitation of the patriots of *Juillet*, and who, like all mean imitators, rather affected the follies than copied the true heroic deeds of their prototypes, put no end to their embraces, notwithstanding the frowns of severe censors, like myself, who, as openly as they dared, discountenanced the silly practice, and very justly observed that it was "no time to tilt with lips."

Phaugh ! How many of these hated salu-

tations had I not to endure? I, one of the latest comers at that giddy festival, I, to whom persecution had attached peculiar interest, and who found myself on my first appearance the people's idol? Most certainly, if anything could have power to sicken me of the revolution, it was the nauseous ordeal of all those greedy faces ready to devour me; and as I shrank from, or writhed under the infliction and drew back, and dried the moisture from my unfortunate cheeks after the *accolade*, I felt that, had our independence continued, the ill-grace with which I resisted that nasty emblem of fraternization would have made me pass for a retrograde, and worn away a popularity so overwhelming.

How the rest of that day and the following were employed I cannot distinctly recollect. I have a dim remembrance of being introduced, by my friend Premoletti, to the "most potent, grave, and reverend signiors," the members of the provisional government; likewise to have visited clubs, *cafés*, reading-rooms, and similar haunts of busy politicians; to have listened to harangues that might have blown St. Peter's of Rome into the air;

to have dined at a public banquet on the first day, and to have had a racking headache on the next.

My name was duly registered in the books of the national guards; I was offered the rank of lieutenant, which I refused with the magnanimity that was most in vogue at the time. At my own request I was engaged to take some rounds with the patrol on the following night. Little of importance occurred during our watch. We had only the trouble to take two or three vagabonds with broken heads to the guard-house; and were compelled to break open the door, and violate the domicile of an honest cobbler, who had got gloriously drunk, and was belabouring his ill-starred wife, whose aversion to the public-house he had construed into lukewarmness in the public good.

The second evening came, and, at sunset, our expedition met under the porticoes of the old Farnese buildings, known under the name of *La Pilotta*. I jumped on my war-horse, with my *Oderisi* rattling at my side, and my *Lazzarine* in my holsters, and trotted leisurely to the place of our meeting. I found

there about twenty amateur men-at-arms on horseback, nearly as many *tirailleurs*, armed with double-barrelled guns, and half a company of Maria Louisa's late fusiliers. Colonel Fedeli, a gouty man, unable to ride, reviewed us. He was the commander-in-chief of the national guard; our La-Fayette in all but the white charger, the majestic bearing, the glib tongue—the same honesty, the same credulity and optimism. He mumbled a few words about “order, discipline, subordination,” and dismissed us. There was no flourish of trumpets, no roll of drum; not a standard was unfurled; we departed in silence, like a procession of monks.

Just as we neared the gate, Porta Santa Croce, a carriage met us, and was obliged to stop till we had all filed off before it. None of the little troop paid any attention to it; but I recognised the livery and the arms on the panel. I saw a countenance only half peeping out at the window; and noticed the slight wave of a white-gloved hand.

That was enough. The eyes of good genii had seen me off; angels would be praying for my safety.

We had hardly passed the town-gate when

a new surprise awaited me. A mounted man of high stature, loaded with heavy arms and accoutrements, dashed up to us, prancing fiercely, and reined in his wild steed close by my side.

“Did you think I would let you go to this sort of game without me? Your rustication at Compiano has but too long kept us asunder. Shield-bearer or groom, aide-de-camp or boot-black, I am yours till death part us.”

It was Pippo Galli. The animal he bestrode, a fierce unbroken stallion, which he had just bought of a miller, and which had been for some weeks the terror of the town, scarcely left him breath enough to utter those few words, or to fall into the ranks and ride by my side. It was a magnificent sorrel, with proud arched neck, with wide chest, with might of limbs unweary. No man had ever ventured on his back; and the miller who had bred him had signally failed in his repeated endeavours to harness him to the cart. My brave friend had saved the steed from that ignominy; and by that iron strength which had hardly a match, and by his early familiarity with such cattle at his father's

shop, had, during the last few days, set about the arduous task of mastering him. He brought him now, fretting and snorting, all lathered over with foam, but yet subdued and overcome, and in great dread of the curb, a stormy but trained charger, to the muster.

Galli had kept his own counsel about such preparations. He had obtained leave to join our detachment only with the greatest difficulty, as our numbers were limited, and the supreme authorities were reluctant to let too many of our wild youth loose about the country. His sudden appearance caused me the greatest delight. I looked at those brave shoulders, at that modest but firm countenance ; and felt that all Italy could not have blessed me with a more trusty or more efficient brother-at-arms. I looked into his face, where I had long since been reading an unwhispered secret ; and I anticipated the day when we should both come back arm-in-arm, with the proud consciousness of having done our duty ; when I should have stepped up to my coy Louisa, and said to her : “ Sister, here is the brother of my soul, the man according to my own heart : he

would never know how to speak out for himself. You would never be able to guess his hidden thought, so I must even be your interpreter and mediator. There ; have him and cherish him. A greater prize no king's daughter could draw. He is only a smith's son, seest thou ; but, I tell thee, a smith's son like him is worthy to touch the lips of a queen."

As I was musing on these strange visions of an unattainable future, a strange sensation came over me.

Has it ever occurred to you, reader, when engaged in the perusal of a chivalrous tale, to wonder how the hero could be made to roam for days and weeks over hill and dale, across mountains and deserts, without ever stopping at an inn to call for his supper, and without anywhere stabling his horse ? If you have, I think you will now feel equally tempted to inquire when and how I ever found leisure to sleep ; for if you had told them right, you would find that three nights have elapsed since my departure from the castle of Compiano, and that the fourth had now set in ; that I have hurried through novel and busy scenes without ever allowing

myself an instant of rest. The first night was spent in that harum-scarum journey from Compiano to Bardi; the second was passed partly in a sacred interview, partly among the revels of the guard-room; on the third I was patrolling about town, a volunteer watchman; and here I am, on the fourth, riding out on my first campaign!

Nature, however, could be defrauded no longer; and although I had, through juvenile caprice and romantic sentimentalism, inured my frame to the greatest privations, still I was fairly beaten in this instance, and felt, in all its dreadfulness, how vain it is to battle with sleep.

Had I been permitted to give my horse the spur, and get on at a brisk gallop, I might have safely ridden all night, without being aware of my utter exhaustion; but as it was—as we marched in the rear, and were obliged to keep up with the toilsome measured pace of the infantry,—we had not gone quite a mile ere I lost consciousness of myself and of all around me. Galli, who was fresh and full of animal spirits, knew not how to account for my present depression; and only his friendship prevented him from putting

the worst construction upon it. In vain I talked to, or thought of him ; in vain I called to my aid all that, under other circumstances, had a stirring influence on my soul. It was vain to call out, Italy ! Italy ! or to press my hand on my breast, where a lady's glove was treasured up ; I strained my eyes till I forced them nearly out of their sockets. The eyes were open, the tongue spoke ; but the mind was absorbed in an abyss, how many thousand fathoms deep ! I goaded my good charger in the hope that his bounds and capers might arouse me ; but it was useless torture to the body ; the soul was hopelessly asleep. I did not see the companion by my side, not the road, the hedges, the few waggons, the rare and weary wayfarers that we met on our progress ; all objects went round and round my dizzy and throbbing head, like a legion of shades. With slackened reins, with nodding head, with dropping jaw, I reeled to the right and left, as no drunken man ever did. The splendid bridge on the Taro, the blackened ruin of Castel Guelfo, with other objects that never failed to excite my admiration, all passed by me not only unheeded but actually unseen.

At last, after about two hours' march, as Galli's horse in a fit of impatience leaped wildly into the air, my own grey was seized with an emulous spirit; he reared up on a sudden and threw his rider into the dust, passive and helpless, as we say in Italy, "like a bag of rags."

The fall awoke me. I looked up, and it seemed as if the starry vault of the firmament was following the unhorsed wight in his catastrophe. However, there is a providence, they say, for drunken people, and there must be one for sleeping horsemen also; I got up unhurt, had a short explanation with the officer that commanded us; resigned my horse into the hands of one of the foot-soldiers, and marched forward to the vanguard, where the *tirailleurs* made room for me in their ranks.

Yet even walking I slept; I fell back from rank to rank, till I suddenly found myself in the midst of the soldiers in the centre; who, as they marched steadily in close ranks, pushed me on before them, and it was to them chiefly that I was indebted if I was not left alone behind, standing still like the statue of Lot's wife, till I had slept out the four nights

in which I had so wantonly tampered with nature, and disregarded her claims.

Thus I groped along to Borgo San Donnino; and—as a strange climax to these strange phenomena—when we finally came within sight of its old and ugly cathedral, when the blessed light of the new day dawned, I felt refreshed and revived as if I had lain all night on a pillow of swan-down.

We must have halted here and there on the march, though I have no recollection of it; as I also saw and heard nothing of an encounter we had at an inn three miles on this side of San Donnino, which was afterwards described to me by my friend, who informed me I had played a sufficiently conspicuous part in it.

As we were standing to our arms at *La Parola*, a travelling coach, drawn by four post-horses, was heard rumbling towards us, and was stopped by our men in the van.

An old lady, wrapped in furs and shawls, peeped out at the window, and with a thorough bass voice asked to speak to the commander of our detachment. The captain rode up, and the traveller, throwing back the thousand folds of her winter garb, and

ridding herself of a hood that screened her countenance, revealed to our astonished gaze a pair of most unmistakable whiskers.

“Gottardi,” she said, “how glad to find an old comrade at the head of these brave youths! Do you not know me? I am your old friend, General Zucchi. I have just given the Milan police the slip, and here I am on my way to Reggio and Modena, where I am expected. Brave young men!” continued the veteran, waving his hand wildly around, for his hoarse voice could not well be heard by the whole company, “march on boldly and cheerfully; dismay and confusion reign among our Austrian foes. The day is our own!”

“Viva l’Italia!” cried our young men, raising their clattering guns for a salute of honour; and the coach went lumbering on its way.

This was then General Zucchi! the old warrior of the kingdom of Italy! the best general of Eugène Beauharnais! The revolution had then found a worthy leader, and our efforts would now have method and consistency!

Alas ! that poor Zucchi did not disappoint his admirers on that occurrence only ! at Palmanova, at Rome, in the most important junctures, he has been ever since the stormy petrel of Italian movements. It is impossible to deny him talents ; no one ever called his honour in question ; but the man has no luck, and his star casts its evil spell on all he undertakes.

We reached Borgo San Donnino, as I have said, and there found Captain Pelosi, who was waiting for such small reinforcements as we brought with us, ere he ventured on his attack on Fiorenzola. We were allowed a few hours to recruit our forces, and the most conspicuous townsmen stepped forward, suing for the honour of welcoming into their houses the young deliverers of the country. I accepted the hospitable advances of a young lawyer, who had elegant lodgings on the market square, and who could boast of such a buxom young wife, as would have made the humblest hut a paradise.

Our table was laid in expectation of us ; and we fell to our supper, or breakfast, with the appetite of young soldiers. I was induced

to throw myself on a couch in one of the upper rooms, just as the first rays of the rising sun made their way through the window shutters. But will anyone believe it? Sleep I could not; that first march had, it seemed, already penetrated me with a trooper's spirit, and I was resolved to enjoy a trooper's privileges. The rosy cheeks and coal-black eyes of our kind hostess had not been lost upon me; I stole down stairs, found her alone seated near a balcony, took place beside her, and paid my court with all the gallantry, eagerness, and impetuosity befitting the man of the sword. I do not know how far I might have lost my senses in such a company, had not, in good time, the *générale* been rolled, and the national force been summoned together down in to the square.

The young militiamen who had followed Captain Pelosi, amounted to nearly one hundred; and these joined to the riflemen, to the regular infantry, and the little body of cavalry which had come with us, constituted an army of something less than two hundred men. The fusiliers, sixty in number, were regular soldiers, wore the ancient uniform of

their late sovereign, and were under the immediate orders of Captain Spaggiari, one of their own officers. The national guards were dressed in sportsmen's coats, *blouses*, caps, and fancy dresses, which made the whole company resemble a troop of armed brigands. The cavalry were better equipped in dark green or black, and generally well mounted. Several of the body-guards of Maria Louisa were with us, and their horses were to some extent trained. Captain Pelosi was the commander-in-chief of the whole force. Captain Gottardi was master of the horse under his orders. Premoletti, and two other civilians in plain clothes, followed in a carriage in the rear, under the title of commissaries—probably in imitation of the agents of the French Directory—but I never knew to what purpose.

Captain Gottardi, our chief officer, and Modesti, our lieutenant, were old soldiers; such, independent of age, were styled all Napoleon's veterans. The first, at the restoration, had been appointed captain of the body-guards of Maria Louisa. Modesti had been less fortunate. He was a married man, with children, and, deprived of his

half-pay for his complicity with the Carbonari in 1820, he had earned his livelihood by exercising the profession of a fencing-master. He had been one of my own teachers in that noble art, in which he possessed a skill not easily matched in our parts of Italy. He was, however, affable and polite, and, as if anxious to do honour to his name, had nothing of that swaggering air which too often characterizes men of his calling. He was endowed with a stern, though unassuming bravery, and his brothers-at-arms had a hundred tales to tell of his former exploits, to which he himself could never be brought to allude.

My other comrades had most of them served in the body-guards, which was altogether made up of private gentlemen of fortune, and had a smattering of the routine of the cavalry service. I knew them but slightly, and the tone of raillery with which they alluded to my unwarlike conduct and strange mishaps of the previous night's march, was not calculated to promote further intimacy. I rode, therefore, side by side with the lieutenant, and my own Galli, who came in for his share of those gentlemen's

sneers, notwithstanding equestrian feats that were absolutely prodigious, and which called forth storms of applause from the assembled multitude.

A greater number of friends had I among the *voltigeurs*, or riflemen of the national guards that marched with us. There were three of my fellow captives at Compiano, who had come up with me in the night, Farfarello, Sidoli, and another. Of our schoolfellows also a great number. Count Berardi and the green-faced De Ferrari, marched side by side. The latter exulted at the idea of meeting his father in the enemy's ranks.

The eight miles that divide Borgo San Donnino from the town we were going to expugn, might have been got over in two or three hours. Our commander-in-chief proceeded with great caution, however, and halted at every few rods. Before we arrived in sight of Fiorenzola, luckily the townspeople came out to meet us with the welcome announcement that the Commissary De Ferrari and his little band had withdrawn.

I say "welcome announcement," for those

were not the enemies I cared to meet in the field.

We rode on at full speed to reconnoitre. No traces of the enemy were to be found anywhere. We had conquered before we arrived.

The short afternoon was spent in rejoicing and *fraternizing* with the good people of the town. Those fanatic terrorists, Berardi and De Ferrari, baffled in their thirst for the commissary's blood, amused themselves by knocking down the ducal arms that hung on the door of the municipal palace, and other principal buildings.

The flag of our company was seen waving from the balcony of the Town Hall, whence some of our ardent demagogues addressed the people in words that could have opened a breach into the walls of the citadel of Piacenza.

Night came. The barracks at Fiorenzola were taken up by our sixty fusiliers. Captain Pelosi was at a loss how to quarter the rest of his little host. He made the tour of the town, after which, being precisely as wise as before, he yielded to the solicitations of those hospitable citizens, and

billeted his troops among them. A few were lodged at the inns; the rest were allowed to accept such treatment as it was in the power of those good burgesses to afford. Our horses and ourselves were quartered in the courtyard and premises adjoining the Town Hall.

About ten o'clock in the evening a commercial traveller put up at an inn in our immediate neighbourhood. He had by the greatest hazard smuggled himself out of Piacenza, and told marvellous tales about the strict siege of that town, and of the great stir and bustle among the troops of the garrison. He was brought before Captain Pelosi, who listened to him with contempt. In vain did the officers of his staff, and the commissaries of the government remonstrate against the imprudence of thus disbanding our forces at the distance of only twelve miles from an Austrian citadel. Captain Pelosi's arrangements were made, and he was not the man to submit his own to other people's judgment.

Nothing could be more comical than his final exhortation, as he called us around him at sunset, and dismissed us for the night.

“Children!” he said, “I hope you know me. My father was hanged as a Carbonaro, my brother was sent to the galleys. If they catch me, I’ll give them leave to serve me in the same way. So now go to bed like good lads. We have to deal with a pack of cowardly hinds. They did not wait for us here, ’cause why? because they were afraid. The Austrians look on and hold their peace. The blessed Virgin and the non-intervention guard you. Go to sleep.”

Notwithstanding the warning of the French traveller, and the unanimous advice of his subalterns, he trusted to the Virgin and the non-intervention. He sent every one, and went himself, to bed.

There is something to be said in his exculpation. He was now very old, and had never been anything but a poor imbecile at the best of times.

Our master of the horse was a man of different temper, and did not follow his superior’s example. Captain Gottardi questioned the *commis-voyageur*, whom he did not trust, and cross-examined him. Finally he summoned us into a large coach-house, placed a sentinel at the door, ordered our

horses to be saddled and picketed in the yard outside, and sending for some armfuls of straw, bade us not to undress or lay down our arms.

Then he wrapped himself in his cloak, and stretched himself on the floor; and our supper being over, many of us lay beside him.

Certainly none slept sounder than myself. I had an old debt to settle with nature, and my sleep was death-like lethargy. How long I lay so motionless and dreamless, I cannot well say; but it was still dark, pitch-dark night, when the report of several discharges of musketry suddenly roused us from our slumbers.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SKIRMISH.

“ And there was mounting in hot haste : the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war,
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar ;
And near the beat of the alarming drum,
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star ;
While thronged the citizens, with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips—“ The foe ! They come !
They come !”

FIORENZOLA, unlike most of our Italian boroughs, is not wall-girt. It boasts of

“ No bulwarks,
No towers along the steep ;”

none of those proud monuments of warlike times that meet the traveller at every step throughout our dismantled Italy. It lies on an open plain and owes its rise, and probably its name of “ Little Florence,” to the fine cattle and the renowned dairies of its well-watered neighbourhood. It lies on

an open plain, surrounded by wide pasture-grounds, and is open to the four winds, the main-road crossing it from east to west, in all its length. The last skirts of the distant Apennines are seen sloping gently on the south, down to the verdant prairie, through which the Arda, a mountain-stream, just freed from its rocky prison of its native region, breaks forth often with great noise, sometimes also with not a little mischief.

At a distance of nearly half a mile from town, on the west towards Piacenza, the torrent crosses the road, and a long, low, stone bridge is thrown over it. Here Captain Pelosi, finally yielding to the importunities of his officers, had consented, by way of strategic precaution, to station a detachment of twenty of our riflemen, to which Captain Gottardi had added one of his own men-at-arms on horseback. The trooper and one of those sharpshooters performed duty together, standing on the middle of the bridge, from which they were enabled to command a vast extent of the main road and of the adjacent heathy land beyond the stream. The rest of the little band of *tirailleurs* had repaired to a small

hut near the end of the bridge on our side, which may in olden times have been a toll-house, and had there made themselves comfortable.

The horseman was a kind of squire or aide-de-camp to the captain himself. He was a sturdy-looking fellow, a farrier by trade, well known at Parma as the hero of many a popular riot, who went by the name of *Lione*. It was said of him that in a nocturnal affray he had broken through twelve gendarmes who were sent to arrest him, and floored one-half of the number. In look and person he was no bad match for my own friend Galli. The sentinel on foot, on the same watch, was a mere lad from Borgo San Donnino, by name Paolo Mazza. He was the only son of a poor widow, and had been picked up by our demagogues during our short stay in that town. His young head had been filled with bright visions of glory and patriotism, to the desolation and despair of his helpless old mother, whose affecting parting with him at the gates of that native town which he had never left before, was still fresh in our memory.

That lad was destined to be the first victim to the cause of his country.

The night was dark, as I have already observed, and a cold north wind swept down the open plain. The torrent, owing to the long drought and the hard frost in the Apennines, was unusually dry and fordable in every direction. Our unsheltered sentries, perched up in the middle of that low-parapeted bridge, were struggling hard against the freezing night-blast, by wrapping themselves closer and closer over head and ears in their cloaks; and regardless of discipline, they were engaged in as companionable a talk as might be compatible with their difference of age, ideas, and pursuits,—when, with the suddenness of lightning, they found themselves surrounded by a party of armed men, who jumped up from the parapet, as unexpectedly as if they had fallen from heaven. Before the two were well aware whether they had to deal with friends or enemies, the poor youth from San Donnino fell, without uttering a groan, pierced by more than twenty bayonet-thrusts.

The brave Lione behaved with a valour

and presence of mind, which could well justify his claims to that proud appellation. He dashed his heavy gabardine from his shoulders, and dealt with it so stunning a blow to the fellow who had seized hold of his horse's rein, as sent him staggering among the crowd of his compeers. Hence, drawing his sword, and dealing about him with the fury of a blind man, the mighty farrier succeeded in extricating himself from the midst of those as yet unknown assailants; he gave his horse the spur, and rode up to the main body of that advanced post quartered at the toll-house, roaring "To arms!" with all his strength of his lungs.

Taken by surprise, and unceremoniously roused from their slumbers, those twenty young men rushed from their night-quarters with the countenance of men determined to face the sudden danger. With the haste of young soldiers, however, they fired their fowling-pieces at random; when, hearing the measured tramp of several companies of infantry pressing forward at the *pas-de-charge* on the bridge, they remembered that their guns had no bayonets, and feeling the

impossibility of resisting a close attack, they scattered about the country in the greatest confusion.

“Fire!—the brigands!—the Austrians!” exclaimed our equestrian friends at the coach-house, rising on their elbows from their trodden layers of straw. The report of those guns had now sounded the *reveille* which, with everybody else, startled me also.

Captain Gottardi was up first of all, with his hand on the hilt of his broadsword. His brave eye flashed even by the light of the farthing candle that was now nearly burnt out.

We rubbed our eyes and looked into each other's faces, listening in so awful a silence that the heart of many of us could be heard fluttering with tumultuous emotion.

Presently a horse was heard galloping full speed on the flinty pavement of the main street. It stopped at the door of the Town Hall, and in two seconds our brave Lione stood before us with drawn sword.

“Arm! arm!—to horse! to horse!” he cried. The enemy have forced our outposts, and are pressing hard on my footsteps.”

“The enemy!—what enemy?” inquired the captain.

“The brigands—the Austrians—the fiends of hell, for aught I know,” quoth the Lion: “we have not a moment to lose. To horse, captain; for God’s sake, to horse!”

“The Austrians? Impossible!” cried one.

“We are betrayed!” said another.

“Betrayed!” said the captain, frowning disdainfully. “Who betrays you? Are not our horses saddled and bridled, and our good swords by our sides? To horse, Lione! Austrians or devils, we’ll meet them like men.”

Out we all rushed into the yard. In less than a minute we were all mounted. One of the ostlers from the neighbouring inn, who had done duty as a groom, half-dressed, holding with one hand his nether garment, with the other threw open the huge doors of the Town Hall, and we issued into the open square, one by one, ranging ourselves in two lines, immediately outside.

The main square of Fiorenzola was yet silent and dark. The town militia, who had been in charge of the Town Hall, had deserted their post; so that the palace was now unin-

habited. A link-torch was still burning before that clumsy building, and our company's flag was seen waving from the balcony, where it had been left in the evening.

“Ho!” said our Captain Gottardi; “one of you go and fetch me that banner. S’death! there is not one left of those municipal cravens!”

I jumped from my saddle, and ran to the Town Hall. It was not without difficulty that I groped my way along its dark galleries and benighted staircase. But I finally reached the balcony, snatched up our standard, and handed it to the captain.

“Now, my friends!” said the captain, in that blunt style of eloquence that circumstances often render sublime: he was still a tall, handsome man, with fine aquiline features, and a most stately bearing,—“nothing is easier than to do as I bid you. Let your pistols sleep in their holsters. It is a dark night, and fire-arms can be of no use. Draw your swords; and when I say ‘charge!’ plunge your rowels into your horses’ sides, and follow!”

“Mind you, do not lose sight of me. As long as you can get a glimpse of these colours,” he

said, waving the banner in a manner which might have become Henry IV. and his *panache blanche*, "you may be sure you go right."

Then he moved off pacing leisurely towards the invaded bridge. The mighty cavalcade, four abreast, mustered up in five ranks, advanced.

It was a solemn and anxious moment. The eyes of all were stretched towards the road before us—to that part of the town whence the first alarm had been given. On that side, however, all was still; and as far as our eye-sight could reach through the dead-dark night, the main street was empty and mute.

Our drawn blades were now gleaming in the pale light of that solitary beacon at the Town Hall; our eyes were distended and strained in our eagerness to pierce through the gloom.

It was in that hour when all colours are blended into one sable hue, and I cannot, therefore, say how we all looked. I cannot fairly assert that the cheeks of none of us were blanched, or that our pulses beat steady and regular in presence of that so imminent and yet so vague and undefined danger. All I can say is, that we stood at our post,

and started in the best order and silence ; and I owe my comrades this justice, that, whatever their feelings at this strait, they put a good countenance on the game ; they all seemed to breathe freely, and awaited the results of that sudden alarm with much of the firmness and dignity of experienced warriors.

It behoves an Italian to be very modest and temperate on that subject, else the terrible “ Be quiet you : who are the conquered ? ” will be instantly flung in his teeth. From the battle of Fornovo to that of Novara, during three and a half centuries, the Italians scarcely ever showed their face on the battlefield except to be beaten,—and this especially when under the command of native leaders—especially when they took arms for the sacred cause of their country. There may be a thousand ways of explaining the dolorous fact, which need not otherwise imply any want of personal courage and devotion : still the stubborn fact is there, and it stigmatizes the whole race ; and the less an Italian says about martial prowess, the better for himself and his country.

Were I now to speak of the ineffable de-

light, of the glow of intense heat, of the thrill of wild combativeness which ran through my veins, when I found myself for the first time in the cold open night air, mounted on a brave horse, brandishing a heavy scimitar, eager for the coming engagement, I should be met by a sneer on my reader's face—who, scarcely allowing that good manly blood can be secreted from any other substance than honest roast beef and plum-pudding, would refer to the anecdotes of old Ferdinand of Naples, who insisted on supplying his cuirassiers with a back, instead of a breast, plate; contending that that was the only part of their body his macaroni-eaters ever turned to the enemy; and repeating that—“*Fuggiranno sempre*” (they'll run away yet, do what you may)—with which that same king concluded all discussions on the subject of military discipline.

Well, then, with such hearts as God had given us, we advanced, four abreast, in one column, along the narrow main street. We had reached the outskirts of the town without meeting one living being. But, as we cleared the last houses a dark line was seen drawn up before us, covering the road and

the meadows around as far as eye could reach ; all dark and silent, like a dark mist rising from the ground.

“ Qui fa là ? ” cried a shrill northern voice, with a strong German accent.

“ Italia e libertà ! ” was the answer, uttered in the firm deep tones of the south. It was the voice of our undaunted leader.

“ Fate foco ! ” again screeched the counterfeit Italian voice from the opposite ranks ; and instantly a red blaze burst from all that sable line, followed by a sharp detonation.

There was a whizzing in the air, but no harm done as far as I could perceive ; but the suddenness and violence of the explosion was too much for our ill-trained chargers. Dazzled, bewildered, they broke through all ranks, and as we were immediately saluted by a second discharge, they became ungovernable, plunging, rearing, till, under the lead of the hindmost of them they fairly turned, and carried away their riders, willing, nilling, never allowing us to rein them in till they saw us safe behind the buildings of the main square.

“ Dio Sacrato ! ” swore our captain in a towering passion, as, accompanied by his

lieutenant Modesti, and the brave Lione, he cantered after us with great stateliness, covering our precipitate retreat.

“Dio Sacrato!—Have you got no bridles and spurs that you suffer those ill-mannered brutes to get the better of you?—However,” he added with a deep sigh, “all the saints of Heaven could not help us through that forest of bayonets. Come! we must to headquarters. We’ll hear what our commander-in-chief has to say to us.”

The head-quarters were at the *Osteria del Cervo*, on the eastern end of the town. So eastward we moved, I am grieved to say, from the enemy.

All began to be stir and bustle on this side of the town. As we advanced with a little more cautiousness and on our guard, we were met by a few of our young national guards, who, distributed as they were in private lodgings, had dressed themselves in great haste, and loaded their guns, issuing forth from the houses by twos, by threes, in small parties, at a loss what to do or whither to go.

Various and odd was the information we picked up on our progress.

“The brigands, sir, ay, ay!” cried one; “they are coming down from the road of the Apennines.”

“The Austrians, by J — s!” shouted another; “I have seen many hundreds coming up from the rice-grounds.”

“Hussars, brave captain, Hungarian hussars!” said a townsman; “there are many of them plundering widow Berti’s farm, on the bank of the river.”

“This way, my friends!” screamed another. “You are just marching into the lion’s jaws. We are encompassed on all sides. Half the garrison of Piacenza is here!”

Presently a drummer of the national guard came down the main street from the east, belabouring his instrument with a zeal and intrepidity which Napoleon would have rewarded with a red ribbon.

“Stop your infernal noise, you fool!” exclaimed our captain, out of temper, for all those strange tidings had distracted him. “What the devil are you drumming about?”

“The *générale*, sir captain!” answered the fellow. I knew him. It was no other person than poor Angelo Brunetti, the Far-

farello of our school and our prison. He had run away from his parents on his first arrival from Compiano, and having been refused as a *tirailleur* on account of his stature, had volunteered his services to their company, even in that humble capacity. "I am doing drummer's work, sir, arousing the sleepers."

"Good!" said the captain; "where is Captain Pelosi?"

"Gone, sir, gone to meet the enemy."

"The enemy, but where is the enemy?"

"Plenty of 'em, sir! 'tis here, there, and everywhere. A funny night this! I did not think we should have such good sport so soon."

Gottardi looked at him. "Rap on, then, my friend, there's a good little fellow!" and we passed on. The good little fellow, encouraged by the captain's flattering appellation, redoubled his efforts, and went rapping on with admirable activity, till he was met by a party of mounted Hungarians, who hewed and trampled him down.

Meanwhile a brief consultation took place between Gottardi and his lieutenant. The two officers marched at the head of our little

column, while Lione, Pippo Galli, and I, who followed at a little distance behind, were enabled to overhear their conversation.

“What’s to be done, Modesti? I hear no report of muskets. By G—d, our commander has bolted!”

“Likely enough, if he was warned in time. We shall not get off so cheaply.”

They were right in their surmises. A country lad, from that neighbouring farm of widow Berti’s, to which allusion has been made, and which out of wanton thirst for plunder, a few hussars had attacked ere the plan of the Austrian commander was carried into complete execution, had providentially made good his escape, and hurried with the bad news to the “Osteria del Cervo,” or Stag Inn, where the commander Pelosi, the three commissaries, and a few other officers, profiting by that timely information, and by the too leisurely preparations of the enemy, had ordered out the sixty men of the line from the barracks, and at their head had stolen off, directing their course towards the hills, through a mountain-path that had hitherto escaped the attention of our nocturnal invaders; thus leaving the divided

and unprepared national guards and the cavalry to shift for themselves as they could best.

Those of our young *tirailleurs* who had been undutiful enough not to comply with our commander's injunction in the evening, and had not gone to sleep, had, on the first report of hostilities, by sheer instinct crowded to the head-quarters, where, finding the inn deserted, and their rulers gone, they had intrenched themselves within the walls of the hostelry, uncertain what course to pursue.

This Stag Inn was, as I have said, situated at the entrance of the town on the eastern side, and faced the main road that led to Borgo San Donnino. Our enemies had so warily encircled us on all sides, that before the bridge on the Arda was attacked on the west, they intended that an equal force should be stationed on the eastern road, so as to cut off our retreat. Their plan would have fully succeeded without that premature alarm at the widow Berti's; at any rate we were so completely beleaguered, that, with the exception of Captain Pelosi and his followers, none of us had a chance of escape.

“Well, my friend,” concluded our captain, as the awkwardness of our real position began to break upon him; “there is no other resource: we must cut our way through thick and thin, and get out through the very midst of them.”

But the brave Modesti shook his head gloomily, and I know not by what strange recollection a scrap of early scholarship passed through his mind; but he muttered solemnly, with death’s prophetic tone:

“*Venit summa dies, et ineluctabile tempus.*”

I heard every word distinctly.

By this time we came up to the Stag Inn. Our little band halted at a short distance, in an open space opposite the inn; our two officers advancing alone to reconnoitre.

A small body of Hungarian cavalry was seen slowly advancing from the road, headed by a tall dark man wearing the “big cocked-hat” of Maria Louisa’s dragoons. He rode alone several rods in advance of his troop. As he arrived within fifty paces of the inn, he was challenged by a sharp voice from the windows. I recognised the grating tones of our riotous demagogue, Count Berardi.

“Halt!” cried the count; “stop where

you are, or by God Almighty, you are a dead man !”

“Lay down your arms, ye rebels !” cried the horseman. “Surrender, ye traitors, or you die on the gallows.”

“Brigadiere Anselmi, I know you,” again screamed the count, for that was indeed the same non-commissioned officer of Maria Louisa’s dragoons, whose name occurs in the early part of this narrative, and who now with a few of his men had passed over to Piacenza, following his sovereign’s fortunes to the last. “We have old scores to settle between us,” continued the count; “one step further, by God ! and I’ll fire.”

The brigadier, nothing daunted, rode forward, but he had only advanced two steps, when he rolled in the dust, struck on the head by the unerring carbine of the young nobleman.

The Hungarian hussars galloped on to the rescue of their leader; we could count them, they were not more than twenty; as they advanced blindly and madly, without any well-settled purpose, they found themselves exposed to the galling fire of our thirty riflemen, hidden behind the windows,

so that after a disorderly charge, made in the spirit of a vain bravado, and which brought them nearly to the door of the inn, they were obliged to fall back in utter confusion, some of their horses madly leaping over the ditches and galloping away across the open country.

“Now is our turn, my lads,” cried our captain; “charge, my friends, charge, for God and our country!”

So off we started unanimously. The captain, his lieutenant, Lione his aide-de-camp, my friend and myself, found ourselves in the first rank, all abreast, the miller's horse bounding almost like a tiger from the ground at every stride.

Our other men followed at no great distance, in the best possible order. We had soon overtaken the fugitives, who, already disbanded and disheartened, and now taken by surprise, gave way before us, and trusting to their horses' agility, hastened to join their companions in the fields, leaving us sole masters of the road. On we rushed, without a thought of pursuing them.

Presently we came into contact with a body of infantry. The day began slowly to

dawn, and we were almost enabled to descry their white Austrian uniforms.

“Halt, Wer da!” cried their sentinels, or something that sounded like it, probably mistaking us for their Hungarian brethren; but without giving them time to recover from their error, without slackening our speed, without answering one word, down like thunderbolts we plunged among them.

There are not many moments like that in a man's life.

Our gallant captain had couched in rest the spiked staff of his flag as we closed upon our adversaries; and one of them fell before him, pierced through the body. The miller's horse made one more mighty bound, and I saw his huge hoofs dashing against the breast of another of our opponents. The weighty farrier and his still weightier horse made their way with equal impetuosity; and the two opened a breach, through which my slenderer steed insinuated himself with comparative ease and security. I thought I saw a tall swarthy Croatian standing on my way, with his bayonet pointed to my horse's breast. The generous animal gave a sudden bound, and reared up in the air.

For a moment I felt I had lost all control over him, and gave myself up as undone ; but the next, poor Galli, who even in that juncture did not lose sight of me, seized hold of the rein of my restive steed, and by all the might of his iron hand, forced me along in his course.

I bit my nether lip and set my teeth hard ; and brandishing my sword with frantic rage, till the weapon quivered in my grasp, I aimed at the Croatian a blow, which I flattered myself would have power to cleave that famous giant helmet,

“ Which fell from the sky,
And stuck very hard
In the court-yard
Of the Castle of Otranto.”

My ponderous *Oderisi* fell with all its weight upon something that rang under the stroke. What, however, the result of the stroke was, I never had the means to ascertain ; for, dragged by my valiant comrade, in much less than two seconds I found myself clear of the astonished enemy, and fairly out of the *mêlée*.

The Austrians, thus flurried of a sudden, were not, however, slow in recovering from

their panic. They rallied; they closed their ranks after us; they drove back with their bayonets our less fortunate companions; and some of them turning abruptly, sent volley after volley in our direction, which had the effect of adding wings to our flight.

On we rode for our lives, without ever looking back, till we were fairly out of reach of their shot. The moment we halted, my poor charger gave one more desperate plunge and fell, head foremost, never to rise—the Croatian had buried his bayonet in his breast.

“My poor grey!” cried I, as I jumped to my feet, with the assistance of my friends. But I added with sorry pride: “I hope my hand has avenged his fate.”

So saying, I lifted up my sabre.

Oh! the portentous thickness of an Austrian’s skull. The brave ancient blade on which I had put such implicit reliance—which I had selected as the best in a hundred,—had snapped in twain. What resistance the rusty weapon may have met with, that could so successfully baffle the much-lauded temper of that old steel, I was at a loss to divine. I only flattered myself

that nothing softer than an anvil could stand the weight of that blow.

However, there I was, dismounted and pretty nearly disarmed, and never a drop of blood on my shattered blade, to soothe my sorrow for the loss of my charger.

“Turn to the right,” said our captain; “and leave your dead horse to the ravens. Our friends are left behind: we must provide for our own safety.”

So saying, he led the way through a narrow, heavy waggon-road, overgrown with thick bushes on both sides, and winding through the verdant prairie to the south-east. It was one of the many roads to the hills.

The measure proved opportune. No sooner had we disappeared behind the shrubs, that hid us from the main road, than we heard the tramp of Hungarian cavalry. They were the same men, who, driven back from the Stag Inn, had at last rallied round the battalion of infantry we had so miraculously cut our way through, and were now galloping in our footsteps.

Nothing could equal the wildness of their career. Their horses shied at the dead car-

case on the road ; but they gave themselves no time for reflection. On they rode, in hot haste, waving their broad swords aloft, uttering their savage war-cry : away they passed, enshrouded in a cloud of dust, still under the impression that we were running before them.

We stopped to look after them ; and I could scarcely refrain a cry of admiration at the glorious, inspiring sight.

One of their stragglers came last and alone, making speed to overtake his companions, now already out of sight.

It was a temptation too great to be resisted. Galli, on his fierce sorrel, sprang forward like a panther from his thicket, and came down upon the Hungarian with so fell a shock, that horse and man went down rolling and sprawling in the dust.

“Here’s a horse for you, young gentleman,” cried the brave fellow, as he led by the rein, as a prize of victory, the charger of his fallen antagonist. I jumped on the empty saddle, and we were now able to set off at full speed.

We had scarcely ridden half a mile, when the Lieutenant Modesti, who had followed us in silence, suddenly reined up his horse.

“ Ride on, captain, and heed me not,” he said, faintly ; “ I am a dead man !”

As he said these words, he dropped from the saddle. He had been shot through the loins, as we ran from the Austrian infantry. He had either scarcely felt the blow in the heat of action, or with heroic firmness carried it along in our course, till he was exhausted with the loss of blood, and overcome by the faintness of death.

We all alighted and crowded around him. He waved his hand with impatience, and motioned us away.

“ Heed me not ; I am a dead man. Take care of yourselves : farewell.”

Then he sank down once more, murmuring a few unconnected syllables, among which I still fancied I could make out the words of the Latin poet :—

“ Venit summa dies, et ineluctabile tempus !”

Perhaps they were only Latin prayers he recited. There he died.

The day had now fully dawned, and the pale ray of morning rested faint and languid on his exanimated face. The last sound of the receding Hungarian horse died away in the distance, and the sharp firing at

Fiorenzola, of which the frequent report had accompanied us during our hasty retreat, had now either entirely ceased, or was lost in the vastness of the deserted plain. There was nothing to disturb the imposing stillness of the hour; and, overawed by the sudden calamity that deprived the country of so valuable a champion, we stood speechless for several minutes, with our eyes riveted on that manly countenance, already composed to the calmness of death.

What morning prayer could equal the solemnity of that silence? At last the captain broke it:—

“Farewell, then, brave Modesti, and may we live to avenge thy death!”

Then, stooping on the dead body, he laid his hand on the sword which the lieutenant still held unsheathed in his grasp; but meeting with some resistance on the part of the stiffening hand, which clung to the hilt with the tenacity of death: “Well, so be it,” he said; “the sword could never pass into better hands. Let it rest with thee, old friend.—Castellamonte,” he said, throwing his flag, blood-stained, towards me, as he vaulted into the saddle; “there is a weapon

for you. I thought you might just as well inherit the lieutenant's sword ; but let the dead have their own way."

The firing had ceased, as I said, and everything seemed to announce that the unequal combat had been brought to a close. We had found no trace, we had heard not a word of Captain Pelosi and of the main body of our little army, which he had so strategically led out of danger. Unable to join them, nothing remained for us but to look for the shortest and surest way to our metropolis. To Parma, therefore, we determined to ride ; and, guided by a peasant lad, who volunteered his services, and in the keeping of whose family we left the body of our friend, we rode across hills and dales, always on the outskirts of the Apennines, till, after a toilsome march of two or three hours, we arrived in sight of Borgo San Donnino.

The Austrians, we soon learnt to our astonishment, had not appeared before that place. Those Hungarians who had been sent to scour the main road on our track, had ridden no farther than to the bridge of the Stirone, a torrent flowing at the distance of a mile outside

the town, and which in olden times constituted the boundary-line between the Parmese and Piacentine territory. There they halted and encamped for a few hours ; but after a vain display of equestrian evolutions and a lusty blowing of trumpets, intended as a proclamation of victory, they raised their camp and marched back for their breakfast at head-quarters at Fiorenzola.

On our arrival at San Donnino we found the little place plunged into unspeakable consternation. Captain Gottardi, aware of the influence that a man of his rank and character might exercise over the good people of that town, resolved to remain at Borgo, with full intention to make the best of its shattered old walls, of the ill-armed and worse-trained militia of the place, and of such of the stray fugitives from Fiorenzola as might come up before the Austrians summoned the place to surrender. It was but reasonable to expect the enemies would be there before evening, making their best speed towards Parma. At Borgo, therefore, we parted. Our captain needed a trusty messenger to convey the tidings of our

disaster to the provisional government ; and as I was mounted on the fleetest courser, charged me with the mission.

I promised to be back before sunset.

Every one must be aware how imperfect and unsatisfactory the account of a battle, a nocturnal one especially, must needs be, when given by a person engaged in it, unless, indeed, he can be at all places at the same time. It was only after several days, that comparing notes with some of my friends who were up and in arms before me, and others that remained in the beleaguered place long after we had made good our retreat, I was finally enabled to master all the circumstances of the untoward events of that night.

It appears, then, that at about a quarter past ten in the evening, a body of twelve hundred Austrian infantry and two hundred horse, led by those brigands of Maria Louisa who had evacuated Fiorenzola on our approach, and at the head of whom rode the Brigadiere Anselmi, started from the citadel of Piacenza, taking the best precautions to elude the vigilance of the town, and

to prevent any warning reaching us. They had marched the whole night, and were all at their places two hours before day-break. Their aim had been to distribute themselves into various detachments, so as to possess themselves simultaneously of every avenue leading to the town. Their plan would have been fully successful, as we have seen, but for that alarm given at Widow Berti's farm, which sent the farm-boy, terrified and breathless, to startle with his amazing tidings the still perplexed and incredulous Captain Pelosi.

Had our commander-in-chief thought less of himself, and preserved sufficient presence of mind to act coolly and deliberately, he might with the sixty men he had already under arms, and with our little body of cavalry, have kept the Austrians in check, until, at least, our youths had been roused from their slumbers and gathered around him, when we could at our choice either have forced our way through the enemy, or fought with considerable advantage behind shelter of the houses.

But the suddenness of the attack, the number of the assailants, exaggerated, no

doubt, by the terrors of his boorish messenger,—above all, the flagrant breach of that non-intervention which was the rock of our strength — so overcame the very limited understanding of our generalissimo, that he thought, if he could only get himself and as many as were ready to follow him, out of the scrape, he could have reason to thank his good stars, and boast that he had well deserved of his country.

He had been sent to clear the ground of Maria Louisa's brigands, but not of the Austrians!!

He marched off to the Apennines, as we have said, and after entangling himself in strange and narrow defiles, with a helplessness that did no honour to his organ of locality, he led his troops, weary and starved, at dead of night, to Borgo San Donnino.

Vexed at the sight of so many whom they already regarded as their prisoners, so easily eluding their grasp, the Austrians invested more closely, without, however, venturing to enter, the town. A detachment of Tyrolese sharpshooters were ordered to possess themselves of the bridge of the Arda, and their

sudden and well-managed, but not altogether successful attack, had given at last rise to the first alarm.

At this juncture our own brilliant episode comes in. Out of twenty horsemen that we had mustered on the Town Hall square, only four, the reader is aware, had the good luck to carve their way through the iron circle within which we had so unwittingly suffered ourselves to be compassed round about. Our followers, entangled among the same ranks we had so happily seen daylight through, were driven back at the point of the bayonet, and hurried to the town, where they placed themselves under shelter of the fire of the brave *Tirailleurs* at the Stag Inn.

Before the walls of that ever-memorable hostelry, the main action was now reduced. The doors of the courtyard had been thrown open to receive our routed horsemen, and the few other militiamen, who wandered from street to street, uncertain of their fate.

On their part, the Austrians, feeling now the necessity of coming to an open and decisive engagement, poured down *en masse* from the six different avenues of the town,

and chasing before them the few helpless stragglers they met on their path, they all crowded—a tremendous host—before the walls of that inn, which our daring rebels had, like the knight of La Mancha, dignified into a citadel.

Here began a lively and obstinate *fusillade*; for the Austrians, in spite of their numbers, and with all their undoubted valour, kept at a respectful distance; and our sportsmen-warriors, although well protected by their situation, had to keep up the war with double-barrelled guns, or fowling-pieces, ill suited to cope with the formidable rifles of the famous Tyrolese sharpshooters. Owing to these reasons, many a shot was fired on both sides with no effect; and at the end of two hours, not more than thirteen Austrians lay stretched under the walls of the inn, whilst our friends escaped almost altogether unscathed.

The front of the house and the yard wall were seen in the morning all dotted and scored with the leaden hail that had pitilessly and uselessly pelted against it.

The fire of our brave patriots, however,

was silenced, owing to the scantiness of their ammunition and the mad prodigality with which it was squandered away; and the besieged, reduced to their last charge, found themselves at last at the discretion of their enemies.

Luckily for them, the Austrians, always in the dark as to the real position of affairs, dared not, or cared not, to pursue their advantage any further. Either through discretion or humanity, they shrunk from the scene of strife and carnage which would have been the consequence of any attempt on their part to carry the house by storm; and, leaving a strong body of their infantry to guard that well-garrisoned but ill-ammunitioned stronghold, they made their best speed to secure the rest of the town.

It was morning meantime, and the honest burghers of Fiorenzola, though not a little panic-struck at the noisy drama that had been performing all round and within the precinct of their walls, yet began to rise from their beds. They peeped out at the windows; they called to each other across the streets; they congratulated each other

on having survived the storm ; and, reassured by prevailing silence, the boldest threw the shutters of their shops ajar.

They looked with awe and mistrust on the flushed faces of their hungry northern conquerors, by no means easy as to the share that their dear larders and cellars would have to bear in the tribute that could not fail to be exacted as the prize of victory. There was a bustle, an ominous whispering, staring, and wondering, that seemed to foretoken no good. Some of them remembered with compunction the half-drunken merry-makings of the eve, and wondered how far they might consider themselves as “compromised” — that is the phrase—or committed.

Mingled with the crowd of those gaping townspeople, unarmed, crest-fallen—that is, uncockaded—might be seen a few stray “*militi*” of our national guard, who, either voluntarily issuing, or forcibly ejected, from their hosts’ inhospitable dwellings—inhabitable through fear—had rid themselves of their arms and national insignia, and walked uneasily about, looking as foolish and sheepish as may be readily imagined, with no better hope than either to pass unobserved, and be

lost among the crowd of inoffensive natives, or to be enabled to sneak out through some unguarded outlet, and baffle the pursuit of their foe.

The number of these luckless wretches so unwittingly entrapped, considerably increased, when, "In the name of Maria Louisa, archduchess, etc., duchess, etc., and by order of the Cavalier De Ferrari, commissary extraordinary, etc., and of Colonel Radivizky, of Archduke Leopold's Hussars," it was "enjoined to all and each of the inhabitants of Fiorenzola, and of its immediate appurtenances, that whosoever had either voluntarily or compulsorily given shelter, lodging, food, or other entertainment, to any of the rebels belonging to the self-styled National Guard from Parma, should, within an hour from the promulgation of the present edict, expel the aforesaid intruders from their domiciles, premises, etc., and convey their arms, ammunition, etc. to the Town Hall, under penalty of incurring themselves the charge of rebels and traitors, and being treated with all the severity of martial law." It was added, that whenever the loyal townspeople should meet with resistance on the

part of their visitors, "they could rely on the support and interference of her Majesty's troops, as well as on those of her august father and ally, Francis I. emperor of Austria," etc. etc.

This precise and peremptory decree, backed as it happened to be by twelve hundred bayonets, admitted of no very extensive interpretation. Some of the townsmen, alarmed as they were, braved the danger to the last, and vindicated with passive resistance the sanctity of their dwellings. A few others found themselves hectored and brow-beaten by our audacious rebels, who, with the dogged determination of wild beasts at bay, refused to abandon their place of refuge, and, with knives at their throats, kept their hosts as prisoners within their own doors, and as hostages for their own safety. But with these few exceptions, the commissary's orders were executed to the letter. Most of the landlords beset with tears and supplications their troublesome visitors; they pleaded their own state of utter helplessness, the dangers to be apprehended from the brutality of that half-civilized soldiery,—in short, they rea-

soned, remonstrated, conjured their guests out of their doors.

“Great was our astonishment,” said my friend Camillo Rondani, from whom I obtained all the information relating to this part of the narrative. He was one of my young friends at Compiano,—a young man with a mild and almost feminine exterior, but of great steadiness of heart, nevertheless. He had been one of the bravest of the brave at the Stag Inn, and had, with his thirty companions, been let out by mine host through a secret door at the back of the stables, and was now wandering about with many companions of misfortune in quest of a good opportunity of escape.

“Great was our astonishment, but greater our uneasiness, as we met about the streets or on the Market Square, without so much as daring to address each other, so much as to raise our eyes into each other’s faces. We put on our boldest look as we walked by those long rows of Austrian infantry, who, with clothes soiled and faces begrimed with gunpowder, were now resting on their muskets, and returned

our gaze with their own vacant and stolid indifference.

“ However, as long as we had only to deal with those brutal Northerners,” continued my informant, who was a good Parmesan, true to the national rancour against the Germans, which dates from the days of Guelph and Ghibeline wars,*—“ as long as we were suffered to wander unmolested among the motley groups of churlish peasants, things went on smoothly enough. We lighted our cigars for the sake of company ; strolled up and down with well-affected unconcern, humming and whistling our favourite tunes, staring and gaping like the rest, as if wondering what the devil it all meant, and what had happened.”

But when among the Austrian ranks they began to descry other and better-known faces ; when they saw the *mouchards* of Maria Louisa’s carabiniers performing the office of bloodhounds to their uninitiated

* Il Potta che sapea che i Parmigiani,
Eran nemici alla Tedescheria,
E che era un accoppiar co’ gatti è cani,
Se gli uni insiem cogli altri riunia, &c.

TASSONI, LA SECCHIA RAPITA.

allies ; when a few among those cool patriots, either pointed out by the gendarmes, or betrayed by their beards, by their looks or bearing, were picked out from the midst of the crowd, and laid hold of by those rough customers, and, with a hempen rope round their neck, and all kind of harsh treatment, dragged to the Austrian head-quarters at the Town Hall,—“ then,” said my friend, “ I confess that dark thoughts shot across my brain, and grasping the hilt of my dagger, which I still hid under my waistcoat, I looked upon myself as a dead man, and prepared to sell my life at the highest rate.”

It was thus that between two and three scores of those young *tirailleurs* fell into the hands of their adversaries, whilst their captors very ostentatiously purchased a few halters from a ropemaker's shop in the square, wherewith they loudly proclaimed in their broken Italian they were going to hang the rebels on the Town Hall balconies, as soon as they had broken their fast.

The menace was not lost upon the country folk of Fiorenzola, many of whom, the women especially, by awkward expressions of sympathy and condolence, pointed out the

poor wights whom they bewailed as devoted victims, and thereby most unwittingly enabled their persecutors to single out and recognise them.

“Matters began to wear a serious aspect,” said Rondani. “Some of our dashing young men, who had always shunned the inside of a church, as if under imminent apprehension that the roof would fall on their heads, were now seized with a sudden fancy to hear mass—the house of worship being considered a house of refuge at least for the moment; but we disdained, even in that strait, to have to thank the priests for our necks; we nodded slyly to each other, five or six of us walked very deliberately away from the crowd, dodging each other with great circumspection, and tried one after another most of the by-streets that led to the open country.”

It was in vain! platoons of Croatians were stationed at every avenue.

“Maddened with impatience,” my friend continued, “I walked up to one of these detachments, and perceived with great inward glee that there were no officers among them. Now, a good German, you know, never presumes to think for himself. ‘*Pensa*

Caporale! is the watchword among the Austrian soldiery; so I walked deliberately on the very toes of those good Croats, who stared at me with a puzzled face, as if they suspected that I had no business to go that way, as if they feared that all was not right, and wondered much what the corporal would say if he were there."

But no "corporal," that is, at least, no responsible officer, as it seems, was there to instruct them.

Our friends passed through the ranks, one after another, walking leisurely, talking calmly, gesticulating and switching their canes, very much like fine gentlemen bound on a matutinal excursion.

But no sooner had they got clear of the redoubted line, no sooner did they see the wide country lying invitingly open before them, than—Rondani foremost, clapping his hands with wild exultation, and crying at the top of his voice, "Devil take the hindmost!" they all took to their heels.

"*Pricanti! pricanti!*" shouted the Germans, half in wonder, half in grief at their error; and about a score of them fired their muskets and darted after the fugitive

“brigands.” But “who can run like an Italian?” sneered some uncharitable Englishman, forgetting that swiftness of foot was Achilles’ proudest distinction. Our fellows certainly ran for their lives, the Croats only for their kreutzer a day. So the latter soon gave up the chase, and our naughty young patriots, their spirits rising with the distance that parted them from their blundering, stumbling, floundering, baffled pursuers, had impudence enough to turn round, to look back grinning, grimacing, and—for the vulgar trick is known amongst us too,—“taking sights” at them.

The good success of this first attempt encouraged many others of our ensnared associates, so that, either through similar clandestine ways, or through the sympathy of the townspeople, who afforded them the means of escape or concealment, or finally through intentional oversight of the Austrians themselves, who did not wish to cumber themselves with too many prisoners, the greatest number escaped captivity.

At noon, to the astonishment of all parties, the colonel commanding that nocturnal expedition, ordered the *générale*

to be beaten, mounted his horse, marshalled his troops, led out his prisoners, and prepared to march back to Piacenza. The Austrians had already stripped all the myrtle boughs from a neighbouring churchyard, to ornament their shackos with the leaves of that plant, which, faithful perhaps to their protecting goddess,* they selected as emblems of victory. So with all their colours unfurled, their drums rolling, and their *fanfares* braying lustily, the victorious host moved triumphantly away from the scene of their gallant exploits.

Thus ended the campaign and battle of Fiorenzola, in which—to assume the lofty strain of historical narration—the glory of the day is to be adjudged to the Austrians, who were left masters of the field, who, by their well-conducted, unlooked-for attack, by the able combination of their wary manœuvres, succeeded in surprising, surrounding, and disabling their incautious adversaries, without running the chances of a serious engagement; whilst, notwith-

* “Bella gerant alii, tu, felix Austria, nube :

Nam quod Mars aliis, dat tibi pulchra Venus.”

standing the blind confidence, relaxation of discipline, and total disregard of military rules, by which they were given an easy prey to their enemies; notwithstanding the precipitate retreat of the only force they had ready for immediate action; notwithstanding the absence of their leader, or of any instructions on his part in the most urgent hour of need,—full justice must be rendered to the self-possession, calmness, and intrepidity of those few among the Italians who were allowed by circumstances to have a share in the action.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HERALD.

Perchè tutti sul pesto cammino,
Dalle case e dai campi accorrete,
Ciascun chiede con ansia al vicino,
Che gioconda novella recò ?
Dond' ei venga, infelici, il sapete,
Esperate che gioia favelli ?

MANZONI.

THE bearer of the tidings of that unlucky but not inglorious encounter, I rode in the meanwhile in great haste towards our threatened metropolis. My heart beat with a mingled feeling of awe and exultation at the thought of the tremendous sensation that my news would create among my unforeboding fellow-citizens. I brought with me the solution of long doubts, the disenchantment of fond illusions, the dissipation of a great bugbear, the breach of the non-intervention.

I laid my hand upon my heart—the heart on which that lady's glove rested, which I

had engaged to fling as a pledge of combat to the Austrians. "Thank God!" I exclaimed, "the responsibility of that decisive step is taken from me. The Austrians have spared us the trouble of cutting the knot. War! war!—the war has commenced. May it never cease till the child born at its outset has grown up to bear arms at its close!"

Full of these thoughts I arrived at Porta Santa Croce; it was nearly twelve o'clock at noon, and the long street that leads to the centre of our little capital, was, as usual in those days of liberty, almost obstructed by a crowd, which increased as I advanced. I was instantly recognised; and as it was generally known that I formed part of the expedition to Fiorenzola, they began to wonder what great event could have brought me back.

But their surmises and conjectures were soon changed into loud exclamations of utter amazement. "The Austrians! the enemy! our young fellows have met the enemy! our brave townspeople have taken the citadel of Piacenza! see there! see there! there goes Castellamonte on one of the imperial horses!"

These last words reminded me of the tell-tale steed I bestrode. It had, of course, the trappings and insignia of the Austrian cavalry, and the letters "F. I." (Francis the First), sewn in red cloth on the housing.

That was indeed enough. I made no answer to the vociferations which assailed me on all sides, but urged my good Hungarian on at the top of all the speed that was left him from that long night's work, and forced my way through the thronging mob, outspeeding them in the race, till I alighted at the door of the palace, and was immediately ushered into the presence of the honourable members of our provisional government.

The honourable members of the provisional government, selected by the free and unanimous will of their fellow-citizens to preside over the destinies of their emancipated city, sat around a large table, in one of the council-cabinets in the *Palazzo della Presidenza*, one of the buildings adjoining the ducal palace. They were engaged in grave and weighty deliberations, concerning administrative and financial reform, as cool, calm, and unconscious of the storm that had

burst over their heads, as if between them and their enemies the whole extent of the Pacific Ocean, nay the whole infinity of space intervened ; when there I stood !—I, the bird of evil news, the harbinger of war and strife, dusty and travel-stained, haggard and famished, looking, I dare say, a very personage of Greek tragedy ; there I stood before them !

Oh ! the sterling goodness, the guileless confidence, the helpless improvidence of those five or six men !

The president of that council, Count Lanari, an octogenarian rebel, who had just come out of his closet, where he was all but buried among the classics ; a classic face, himself a classic soul and heart, he lay now almost reclining in an easy-chair, passively listening to the discussions of his colleagues, almost invariably nodding assent, whenever, out of mere formal deference, they turned to him for his final decision.

Alas ! where does Italian revolution too often look for its champions ?

The count's only son, an amiable and accomplished young nobleman, had been implicated in the Carbonari conspiracy of 1820,

and was for the last ten years a wanderer in the land of exile. The grey-headed parent had now issued from his lonely dwelling, hailing the first movement of that insurrection which promised to restore the beloved outcast to his longing bosom; and because his heart was so nearly broken in his country's cause, and because that heart was the very vessel of all that is upright, lofty, and generous in our nature, they had thought that his hand was the fittest to take the helm of a state in a storm; they had burdened his stooping shoulders with all the weight of a revolutionized community!

Alas! ere his pressing invitations had reached his son on the other side of the Atlantic, the Austrian eagle had dashed through the cobweb-work of that non-intervention on which the Italian insurrection hung; and the aged father was himself first in the list of proscription, and only through sheer impotence not a fugitive. Too old and infirm, and even yet too proud to seek his safety by flight, he surrendered to Maria Louisa's satellites. He was thrown into a dungeon, and brought before a military com-

mission, where his calmness and intrepidity commanded the respect of his judges.

Maria Louisa was sufficiently wise and generous to set him, untried, at liberty; but he had scarcely reached the threshold of his house when he died of a broken heart, at the report of his returning son's shipwreck and death.

On the right of the venerable chairman was seated another patrician of ancient descent,—Count Carmagnola, a stately personage, from whom sixty winters had not taken one spark of the fiery spirits of youth: a Spaniard by blood, probably; at any rate, with the fine, sharp, aquiline features of the Spanish race of the earlier Austrian dynasty; a man distinguished rather for strength of will than for brightness or breadth of understanding; more fit to be an agent of a sublime despotism like that of a Charles V., than an instrument of social reorganization in days of liberty. In youth a warrior, a courtier in mature age, he had now embraced the popular cause rather out of personal resentment than conviction. He was rather feared than loved; indeed, scarcely known at all by the people at large,

for whom he invariably expressed unmitigated contempt. How he had been chosen to the office he now filled, was a matter of universal wonderment. It seemed as if, *motu proprio*, he had said, "I have a mind to sit here, and who would dare to find fault with it?"

When that ill-grounded revolutionary edifice tottered and fell, and the victorious Austrians entered the town, he stood manfully awaiting them in his palace-hall, suffered himself to be taken before the court-martial, made no attempt to deny or palliate his guilt, and defied his enemies to do their worst.

On the other side of the president was a man of colossal dimensions, with the shoulders, chest, and brow of a Titan,—the financier Della Costa ; a man of extraordinary physical powers, of stormy passions, of that impetuous but unsteady courage that characterizes men of sanguine temperament. He had been distinguished in his own branch of administration under the ancient government ; and though well known to his employers as most determinately hostile to them, he had been endured and caressed on

account of his talents, and of the important services it was in his power to render to the state.

Some of his great schemes for the improvement of the finances of the state had long been thwarted by the indolence, the jealousy, and sheer dishonesty of the late rulers, some of whom had a swinish interest in keeping that branch of government in an Augæan disorder. The day had now come, thought Della Costa, for a thorough experiment of his views; he seemed to think the revolution had no other object than this financial reform; and laid, even now, the minutes of his plan before his colleagues, as if there were—as if there could be—no Austrians thundering at the gates.

He was now in his fiftieth year, and, as yet, exulting in all the flower of manhood; but it was obvious to the eye of well-experienced observers, that the lymphatic was rapidly getting the better of the sanguine element in his constitution; that one of those crises was at hand which have power to shatter the human frame at one stroke; and that what was now one of the happiest specimens of animal organization,

would in a very short time exhibit symptoms of an equally active and speedy dissolution.

I met him only two years later in Corsica, reduced to scarcely one half of his former size, pining away in loneliness and slothful despondency, helpless and spiritless in querulous *ennui*, urging his friends at home to solicit his pardon, and reconcile him with his sovereign, lest respite should come too late, and home-sickness should accomplish its work.

As a contrast to this burly statesman, a pale, thin, diminutive person stood by his side, only in so far a man that he was clad in a gentleman's garb, and in the choicest, sprucest, most elegant attire of modern fashion; a specimen of the Italian dandy of the old school, one of the few remaining individuals of the *cicisbei* school; one of those fawning, simpering, grimacing non-entities, which our fair ladies of other times used to have about them, very much like spaniels, and trained like those intelligent animals to fetch or to carry, to be petted or snubbed, according to humour or circumstance.

This Cavalier Rovalli, *beau garçon*, aged fifty, but to whom a careful toilette—and a naturally effeminate countenance gave a much more juvenile appearance, was a fashionable anachronism. Like the dotards of Young England, his innovations consisted in a revival of old manners and customs,

“More honoured in the breach than the observance.”

He dangled about those faded beauties of the “middle ages,” to whom that foolish *serventism*, that unmanly courtship of petty attentions and servile devotion, could yet be made acceptable. As the liberal spirit of the times gained ground even among the ranks of these idle beings, the cavaliere was obliged to don patriotism as he would any new style of waistcoat or wristband; he had been launched into the political arena by his scented *coterie*, decked and garlanded with their colours as their political representative, as the darling champion of fair *patriotesses*, who were not perhaps altogether sorry to be rid for a time of his gallant assiduity.

The two other members then present were

Professor Molini, the very Helen of our schoolboy rows,—

“For whose sake so long
The time was fraught with evil,”*—

and Count Jacopo San Natale, a gentleman belonging to the younger branch of one of our highest historical families, a man whose accomplishments came within an inch or so of real genius; a poet, a wit, a scholar, an epicure, accustomed, time out of memory, to take a lively interest in every political, literary, or culinary revolution of his age. It was reported of him, that when yet a young collegian he had been shut up at Fenestrelle, by order of the Emperor Napoleon, on account of an impromptu satirical sonnet—for the count was a bit of an improvisatore—on the birth of the king of Rome, which had given so great an offence to the Corsican autocrat, that he found time to smite the trifling poet, even whilst he was laying his plans for a final grapple with the northern powers. The count languished in narrow imprisonment for full fifteen months, thus atoning by a month of suffering for every

* Per cui tanto reo
Tempo si volse.—DANTE.

line in that luckless libel, when he at last softened the heart of his jailer's daughter, filed the bars of his iron cage, and ventured to scale the walls of that Alpine citadel; he broke his leg in the attempt, and crawled for miles and miles in the dark, found shelter and support among the poor shepherds of the valleys of Pinerolo, and reappeared unexpectedly, in 1814, clapping his hands in exultation and triumph, just as the curtain dropped on the last bloody scene of the Napoleonian drama.

It appears, however, that the governments of "the Restoration" found no better favour in the eyes of the adventurous young count. For he was apprehended and put under arrest as a conspirator at Milan in 1816; banished as a Jacobin from all the continental states of his Sardinian majesty in 1818; "admonished" and ordered out of the ecclesiastical dominions as a free-thinker in 1819; and finally sent to the fortress of Compiano, along with many others, as a Carbonaro, in 1820.

The credit and influence of the venerable Count Stefano, the head of his family, at the court of Maria Louisa, soon, however, obtained the release of his wayward kinsman.

Warned by his friends and connexions, and sobered down also by age and experience, the count now betook himself more exclusively to literature and solitude—a solitude which he took care to enliven with the smiles of a very angel. And now a change came over the spirit of his dreams; a new man sprang up in him. As his love of mankind had hitherto rather indiscriminately set him at war with all powers in existence, so the same philanthropy now inclined him to be pleased with the world as it was, in sheer despair, apparently, of ever being able to mend it; his warm, straightforward benevolent nature put the best construction on the very worst transactions, and he became a thorough-going optimist.

Yet—yet—“Maria Louisa was on the whole a very good sort of a woman—her ministers a very clever set of well-meaning people. The Austrians, rather a harsh, perhaps, but a just and provident race of task-masters; the Jesuits had their bright side too in all their darkness—all was well, all for the best”—yet—on the very first cry of “Italy! Italy!” the old man was found to agree with the new one. He hated no

person, no people. But he loved his own country, and the old long-cherished dream of Italian independence, union, and freedom, once more cast its spell upon him. Out he sallied from his genial abode, once more a harmless, fond enthusiast, the very hero of *couleur-de-rose* revolutions.

Good, dear Count Jacopo! High birth and superior intellect, both aristocracies, were blended in his noble, sunny, florid countenance; the long flowing *zazzera*, or mane, which, as a poet, he had claimed the privilege of wearing, Apollo-like, down to his shoulders, black once as a raven's wing, soft, glossy, so as to cause a pang of envy in more than one fair woman's breast—was now somewhat dappled by sundry streaks of silver, but no less rich and luxuriant. He had a trick of tossing it backwards as he spoke, with a certain graceful majesty, which would have been lion-like, without those rather rubicund than rosy cheeks, those numberless though imperceptible lines that furrowed the contour of his sensual mouth; without the twinkling and swimming of two eyes more than slightly affected with myopy; without those traits, in short, which betrayed

latent epicurism, and told the beholder that there was something besides soul and heart in that distinguished man's composition.

Poor, dear Count Jacopo! I saw him eighteen or nineteen years since that time; the mane still long and full, though rather hoary than grey; his fondness for genial, refined, but not altogether spiritual enjoyment, by no means impaired by years or infirmity; not by the ravages of death, which had left him so nearly alone in the world; and not even by the consciousness that his own life was ebbing fast, and that nothing would be left of him besides a short-lived remembrance in the heart of a few friends; for even in his studies he was a sensualist—culling flowers in his path, and dropping them as soon as gathered—too indolent to deck his temples, even with Anacreon's wreaths.

Such were the men to whom, for want of better, it must be permitted to presume the safety of the commonwealth had been providentially intrusted. There was not one of them, with the exception of the coxcomb Rovalli, for whom I did not entertain

the greatest respect. They were not equal to the times and the wants of the country ; of that I was aware, and I would have preferred a man like Captain Gottardi, or any other who had power to form the whole of the Italian youth into one vast dense squadron, and hurl them in one great charge against the Austrians, without even the shade of an after-thought of strategy or diplomacy.

To them, however, such as they were, was due the first report of that sudden calamity, which ought, if anything could, to rouse their energies into immediate activity. I had already been introduced to all of them, with great solemnity, by my friend Premoletti, and had taken leave of them, previous to my setting out for that short but eventful campaign ; so that they seemed rather surprised than pleased at seeing me back in so short a time.

“ Well, Castellamonte ! ” said Della Costa, who knew with great perfection how to assume a tone of ease and familiarity, “ what good wind brings thee back from Fiorenzola ? ”

“ War ! war ! my lords ! ” was my answer.

"The Austrians have cut our little band to pieces, and are marching full speed against you."

There was an air of truth and earnestness about me that struck them dumb with amazement.

Count Carmagnola was the first to recover his senses.

"The Austrians!" said he: "Come, come, young gentleman; did you stop long enough to look them full in their faces? Have not our valiant youths mistaken a flock of sheep for a warrior host? Such blunders have occurred before, witness Cervantes?"

"My eyes have seen them, my lord, and my sword has cut its way through the thickest of them," I replied with disdain, unaware at the time of the egregious silliness of that bravado. "If your lordship would only look out of yonder window, you would see the Hungarian horse which I brought back from them, in exchange for the brave charger that was killed under me."

Della Costa stepped forward to the window.

"Leave the lad alone, count," said he. "He is a determined young fellow, not to be

moved by scarecrows—Gad, yes, yes! those are the trappings of an Imperial hussar, if I ever saw one in my life.” Then, turning to me: “Come!” said he, “art sure there was no make-believe?—art sure they were Austrians in flesh and bone?”

“Austrians they were,” I replied; “and they fell upon us in too great a number for us even to dream of resistance.”

Here I gave as precise and minute an account of the nocturnal skirmish, as, under all circumstances, might be expected.

They “looked at each other as men look when truth comes to their ears.” *

The financier hung down his head, and mournfully replied: “If all this be true, we may as well throw up our cards, for the game is at an end.”

It was now my turn to look hard into their faces. “The end of the game,” thought I, “what I had hailed as the beginning!”

My presence embarrassed them.

“You are at liberty to retire, young gentleman,” said Count Carmagnola, after a dull pause, mustering up as much of his dignity

* Guardâr l'un l' altro come al ver si guata.

as he had left: "We shall know how to take measures adequate to the emergency."

I bowed, and prepared to withdraw.

"And," he added, "it will be just as well not to divulge an event which may spread needless alarm among the people. The provisional government will give an official report of the encounter as soon as it has gathered its particulars."

Once more I bowed, and left the room.

I found a formidable crowd at the door, but was suffered to make my way unmolested, and to throw myself on the unconscious cause of all that hubbub: but no sooner had I moved towards home, than I found my progress obstructed by the waving multitude, who cheered me wildly and tumultuously, asking for news.

"The Austrians! The enemy! Where did you leave them? How many are they? Which way are they coming? Good God! what will become of us? Hurrah! hurrah! to arms! — we will fight for our homes and country!"

In the midst of these discordant outcries other voices were heard, more shrill, more piercing,—the voices of women, who strove

to open their way through the crowd, and threw themselves inconsiderately under my charger's hoofs.

“My boy ! my poor boy ! what became of him ? You left him in the midst of the strife, and thought of none but yourself. Where is my Pippo ?” cried an old woman, in whom I recognized the mother of my friend Galli, the armourer. “Here is what comes of his friendship with fine gentlemen. He would have thrown himself into the fire for you, and you come back without him.”

I turned round to retort the bitter reproach ; but long before I could utter one word, the old woman had disappeared, borne away by the human tide. Other faces innumerable came staring round ; with other questions — wild, incoherent, wrathful. As I turned the corner of the street that leads to the *Steccata*, I descried a fine tall woman at a window, holding up a little child not much above two years old. The little creature crowed and laughed, delighted at the swarming multitude underneath ; and the happy mother, glad of anything that could afford it amusement, had probably hardly inquired what was the cause of the assemblage.

That lady was the wife,—no, the widow, and that infant the orphan, of poor Modesti !

I was fairly overcome. My father's groom, fortunately, at this juncture, thrust himself forward among the crowd. I threw him the reins of my horse, and alighted, hoping thus more easily to make my escape. I dashed away into the first gap that I was able to find in the throng ; but my good fellow-citizens came hallooing after ; and, no longer kept in awe by the iron tread of the horse, rushed and closed upon me, like the waves of the ocean on a sinking vessel. Never was I in greater danger of being squeezed to death, when, in good time, an angel—for I can hardly think so happy a thought to have sprung from human head—an angel cried out, in a stentorian voice, "*Alla Tribuna !*"

"*Alla Tribuna ! Alla Tribuna !*" immediately re-echoed all round ; and, in less time than I can tell it, a mighty current bore me to the door of the *Palazzo del Governo*, in the main square, to which we had been almost imperceptibly drawing near. The *Palazzo del Governo* is the residence of the governor of the district ; and it has a central balcony right under the town-clock — a kind

of *rostrum*, formerly opened only for the promulgation of laws, edicts, &c. — now the pulpit from which our demagogues were wont to deliver their fiery harangues, and emphatically called the “*Tribuna*,” or “*Ringhiera*.”

There was an appalling silence, as I was hurried upstairs, and almost thrust upon that stage of popular oratory. Wide as that market-place is, its mighty area was all swarming with human heads. I looked down: more than ten thousand faces were turned upwards. I gazed far and wide upon that ocean of heads. I held fast by the rail of the balcony, and stopped to take breath.

But my awe and trepidation lasted only one moment. My good spirit rose within me: I looked down, and again confronted the mass with a smile of proud security. I crossed my arms, and waited, as if to laugh their impatience to scorn; and when I finally opened my lips, I felt even less regard for the many-headed monster than if I had had to deal with each of them singly.

“Countrymen!” I began.

“Speak louder! speak out!” cried the sovereign populace.

“By God!” I muttered, “I am not going to strain my lungs for your sakes.”

“Countrymen!” I repeated; and as there reigned a more profound silence, it appeared that my voice, none of the strongest, reached the remotest parts of the audience. “Countrymen! the Austrians have violated the ‘Non-intervention.’”

A universal cry of astonishment.

“They have fallen upon us by night, like craven wolves; they have killed several of us, and taken the rest.”

A general shout of horror and indignation.

“A few of us have carved out our way by the might of the sword.”

“Hurrah!”

“Others have fought like men to the last. All is lost but our honour.”

“*Viva l' Italia!*”

“Countrymen! the Austrians are coming down upon us. Be men; be worthy of your name. If you are Italians, to arms! Avenge your brothers or share their fate. He dies well who dies for his country. To arms! Italians; to arms!”

As I said this, a genuine fit of enthusiasm raised me to my loftiest level. I grasped the

hilt of my heavy sword, and, unsheathing it, I waved it, like a maniac, above the dazzled multitude. It was that same good old rusty falchion which, it will be remembered, had so indifferently answered my expectation in the hour of need, and was broken in the short scuffle at Fiorenzola, I hardly knew how. The act in itself had something egregiously bombastic and ludicrous; but the effect was electric.

The crowd uttered a deafening yell. "Castellamonte! Viva Castellamonte! *Viva l'Italia!*"

"He has shattered his sword on an Austrian's skull: our young fellows have arms and breasts as well as the Germans."

"To arms! to arms! Home, home, for your muskets! To the Pilotta! To the Pilotta! The muster is under the porticoes of the Pilotta!"

Saying this, the mighty assembly disbanded; and even those very obliging friends by whose persuasive manners I had been hurried to the balcony, and who had thronged in after me, were now seized with the same frenzy as the multitude below; they all hurried for their arms, and I was left nearly alone.

Able at last to effect my escape, I was descending the wide staircase of the palace, when I was stopped by a young officer in uniform, who said: "May I trouble you to follow me? Colonel Fedeli would wish to have the pleasure to see you."

Colonel Fedeli, the commander-in-chief of our national guards, was a tall, square-built veteran, with a heavy look and a sullen countenance. He had been a brave soldier, perhaps, in *soldiering* times; and had risen to the rank of a *chef-de-bataillon* under the French government. The degree of lieutenant-colonel had been but lately conferred upon him by Maria Louisa's munificence, but with a kind hint that it was now in his power to retire and rest under the shade of his laurels; or to speak more plainly, he was turned out to starve on half-pay. The poor veteran was still hale and vigorous, and deemed himself fully equal to the hardships of such campaigns as soldiers had to make now-a-days. He was encumbered with a large family; and Maria Louisa's salaries, even at the full, were none of the most splendid. He thus found himself beset with difficulties, the Gordian knot of which, he fancied, could

be best cut asunder by the revolutionary sword.

Hence had he been for many years a notorious grumbler; hence had he been long since set down as a patriot; and to this popular conceit he owed his present exaltation to that supreme command for which he had in reality neither true moral valour, nor capacity, nor strength of mind or character.

“Who gave you leave, sir,” began the colonel, “to address the people from the balcony, to excite them to tumult and violence?”

That was not exactly the way to apostrophise me, especially in my present state of exaltation.

“The leave, sir, or I should rather say, the order,” I replied with sufficient boldness, “was issued by that power which, it would seem, has here alone the right to dictate. I should like to ask you, sir, how it came to pass, in a town where you have thousands under your orders, that I was nearly choked or trampled to death by the populace?”

The colonel shrugged his shoulders.

“The lords of the provisional government,”

said he, "had begged of you not to breathe a word about that miserable brush at Fiorenzola; and here you are blurting out the whole affair before a crowd of fanatics, and urging them to a mad breach of the non-intervention."

"The non-intervention again!" cried I, quite out of temper at the repetition of that stolid phrase. "Why, sir, the Austrians are at our very gates."

"They may be or they may not be," quoth that consequential ass; "but till they relieve me, I alone have power supreme here, and the whole town must be brought under the strictest military discipline."

With this he bowed me from his presence. I had no sooner quitted him than I was able to perceive what chances this would-be dictator had of enforcing his absolute sway.

I had not been present at the tumult of the 13th of February; and although I had heard its details from more than one accurate and prosy narrator, yet I had been unable to conceive an adequate idea of a town, especially of an Italian town, in a state of popular convulsion.

What I now witnessed—the storm of my own raising—was not exactly a revolution, since no strife or sanguinary disturbance took place ; yet the confusion, the hurry, the harum-scarum irruption of the maddened populace in every direction, and apparently without any determined object, was certainly as great as if the Austrians had actually been at the gates ; and ruin and devastation were imminent. The tolling of bells, the rolling of drums, the shouting of men from the streets, and shrieking of women from the houses ; the banging of doors and shop-windows by terrified tradesmen, and presently the measured march of several patrols, the tramping of horses, the braying of *fanfares* and fifes, the singing of national airs, and a few random shots, awkwardly fired by some of our inexperienced militiamen, sent up a wild, confused clangour, a heaven-storming din, which might have startled the dead from their graves.

In less than half an hour the whole town was under arms ; and before I had reached my own domicile every house had poured forth its own champion, armed and accoutred *cap-à-pie*, in that wild and

motley attire which, till the government had determined on the cut and colours of a national uniform, was understood to represent the martial costume of our Italian youth. It consisted generally of a brown or dark-green velvet jacket, of a cap or slouched hat with a plume, with common sportman's accessories.

By degrees the streets became deserted and silent, as our brave militiamen hastened to the place of rendezvous; and women only were seen, half hidden behind their venetian blinds, awaiting the result of these mighty preparations, calling loudly to each other for mutual encouragement.

I did not well know, when I found myself at home, what course was best for me to pursue. The horse I had ridden from Fiorenzola was unfit for immediate travel, and I had no other. The danger that threatened us, however imminent, was as yet so vague, it was so uncertain from what side the enemy, who was undoubtedly coming, would choose to make their appearance, that I was not quite satisfied of the expediency of keeping my word to Captain Gottardi, by joining him at Borgo San Donnino. If the Austrians indeed

meditated an assault upon Parma, it was more natural that they would cross the Po at Sacca, the nearest point, and fall upon us at night, especially as they had not followed up their advantage on the west, and Borgo San Donnino might offer some resistance.

In my perplexity I threw myself on my couch, and never before did I feel the great luxury of stretching myself at full length upon it. When sense of duty at last roused me from that lulling repose, I had made up my mind that the point of vital importance for us was the town itself, and taking a good rifle and my old pistols with me, I repaired to the meeting-place under the porticoes of the Pilotta.

The buildings that bear that name at Parma, reared by the munificence of the princes of the house of Farnese in the sixteenth century, were only intended as the accessory premises of a large ducal palace, which the degenerate princes of that proud and guilty race in after generations never had money nor perseverance to bring to a close. The edifices still extant encircle two spacious courtyards, surrounded with lofty porticoes in excellent taste, and on the most

magnificent scale. One of these quadrangles was entirely occupied by the stables and other offices of Maria Louisa's extravagant household. The other, by far the loftier and larger, contained the ducal library, the gallery and academy of the fine arts, and that famous Farnese theatre, which, built for a night's pleasure, has remained the object of the admiration of ages. The porticoes, especially underneath the theatre, are supported by pillars of almost prodigious massiveness and strength. The whole fabric (as indeed are most of our edifices in the Lombard plain) is built of brick, but of that superior Italian clay, to which time gives the compactness and solidity rather of adamant than of stone.

The square of the Pilotta, generally one of the dullest and most silent quarters of our faded metropolis, was now the theatre of a busy and almost gay and gaudy scene. More than three thousand of the *élite* of our national militia, young men of every class and condition of life, were here convened and mustered in different battalions with tolerable order and discipline. Their dress, as I have already described it, was rather

fantastic and various, but their muskets were in excellent trim; and however unskilful some of those green warriors might have proved in the use of them, that long array of flashing bayonets was not without its formidable appearance.

The military band and drums were silent, and a vague and anxious expectation reigned over the assemblage. The officers stood in a disorderly group in the middle of the square near the colossal fountain, engaged in grave consultation, and the eyes of every one were fretfully turned towards the *Piazza di Corte*, whence they awaited the regiment of regular infantry, the cannon, and their commander-in-chief, with orders to start.

To start—whither no one knew!

As I drew near this staff of officers, wrapped like one of them in the folds of a large cloak, I found that the most conspicuous and noisy among the number was my old acquaintance, Count Berardi, whom, it will be remembered, I had seen acting with cool determination at Fiorenzola, and whom I had left beset by the Austrians at the Stag Inn, with many others, and, for

aught I knew, killed or taken prisoner by the enemy.

Here, however, he was, safe and sound, gesticulating in his wild and half-savage manner, pointing to sundry musket-holes in his hat and Spanish cloak, and relating, with all the warmth of his peculiar eloquence, the action in which he had been so hotly engaged.

His popularity was rapidly, and to tell the truth, justly eclipsing my own.

It appears that after firing the carbine, which, as I saw with my own eyes, had struck the Brigadiere Anselmi dead under the walls of the inn, and after routing and dispersing the body of Hungarian cavalry which that ill-fated carabineer led to the assault, the count, unable to subdue his mettlesome spirit so far as to bide within doors with his comrades, had sallied forth alone into the dark, besieged streets of Fiorenzola. He had met and seized Anselmi's good horse, which, after his rider's fall, wandered loose and affrighted about; and, once mounted, he had set out at full speed in quest of adventures. He could not fail to

meet many and various in that night of alarm. He was fired at by whole platoons of Croatians ; fired at, by mistake, even by some of our own people, till, though escaping all dangers with the rarest luck, he began to tire of the game.

Unable to make his way back to the Stag Inn, which was now completely blocked up with the hostile soldiery, he presented himself, with wary cautiousness, at the different avenues, but always with the same success. Repulsed from several quarters, he rode up to one of the most solitary parts of the town, which the din of war had not hitherto reached, and where the Austrians stood at ease, cursing the ill-luck that had stationed them so far from the scene of action.

The count was challenged by the sentinels as he drew near ; but he had long resided in Germany—as where, indeed, had he not been ?—and spoke the language of that country well enough to be able to utter the watch-word with a true native accent. By the means of that natural stratagem, with a *sang froid* that had no equal, he rode up to the gazing soldiers, ordering them about with the greatest volubility, and giving him-

self the airs of a field officer, taking the round of the encampment. The fanciful Polish cap and martial cloak he wore, the trappings of his horse, and the darkness of the hour, rendered the delusion complete, and he made his way between man and man along the whole line of the Austrian infantry, till he found himself in sight of the open country, when he gave his horse the spur.

The German officer commanding that detachment had alighted from his horse, and was resting, perhaps slumbering, on a stone bench by the roadside, while one of his men held his trusty charger in readiness by the side of him. Roused by the tramp of the galloping fugitive, and by the clamour of the astounded sentinels who had now recovered from their stupor, the officer vaulted into the saddle, and rode on the track of the count.

The Austrian was the best mounted of the two, and after a short race, Berardi, closely pressed, felt the necessity of showing his face. He wheeled his horse round, and unclasping his cloak, he threw it on his left arm, and with drawn sword confronted his antagonist.

There ensued a short but deadly engagement.

The imperial officer had pistols at his saddle, but neglected, or perhaps, scorned to use his advantage. His first blow fell heavy but harmless on the folds of his enemy's mantle; and he never struck a second. The count bent his head down to his horse's mane, and came down with so desperate a cut, that, as the German raised his right arm above his head to parry it, it struck down the sword, and the hand that held it, to the ground.

The blood sprang hot and copious from the mutilated wrist; the horse, half-blinded and wholly startled by that gory shower, drew back, plunging and rearing with such a fury, that his ill-fated rider, himself dismayed, and as Dante hath it—

“Uplifting in the gloom
The bleeding stumps, that they with gory spots
Sullied his face,” *

suffered himself to be borne back to his friends.

* Levando i moncherin per l' aria fosca,
Si che il sangue facea la faccia sozza.

INFERNO, XXVIII.

The count's recital, which some of us were inclined to look upon as an idle vaunt, turned out to be strictly correct. His antagonist in that equestrian encounter was the youngest son of a Transylvanian prince, only twenty years of age, who, no more than three months back, had entered the Austrian service. At the moment he was called to the combat he was perhaps dreaming of his castle on the Maros, and of the proud mother there, who had girt on his sword for him with her own hand at his departure.

He was conveyed to Piacenza, where he expired on the same day.

The epic interest attached to the narrative of this nocturnal exploit, added fresh importance to a character which stood already sufficiently high in public estimation. The particulars of Berardi's adventures were circulated throughout the whole line of our combatants; and the count felt that he was the lord and ruler of the multitude.

“And, now, ye pack of marmots and hinds!” said the gallant count, whose eloquence, like that of Demosthenes, or Lord Brougham, relied for effect rather on abuse

and upbraiding than on cajolery or adulation.

“Now, ye deluded idiots, what do you mean to do? How long will you suffer yourselves to be led by the nose? How long will you trust old, trembling dotards with the safety of the country? Bestir yourselves! The Austrians will be at your gates by sunset. Will you let them in in the dark, and be caught in your sleep, like foxes in your holes, like dogs in your kennels? Waiting for Colonel Fedeli, are you? Why, you fools, by this time he is a hundred miles off, to—” (I must give a translation of an Italian phrase, rather pithy than eloquent)—‘to eat his figs with a whole skin.’* “But if you are in want of a leader—if you, like the Austrians, are a soulless body till you receive your corporal’s orders,—here I am! follow me! I know the way; and the Austrians know me, too.”

Saying this, he broke from the circle of officers he had thus been addressing, and brandishing and flourishing his sword before the assembled militia,—

* “*Salvar la pancia per i fichi.*”

“Now I’ll show you how these good lads should be addressed.”

Then he bawled out in that cracked, shrill, but powerful voice, that was so peculiar to him—(what a capital soldier of the old black-guard school the man would have made!)—he bawled out:

“*Attention!*”

They started; or rather, since with all my abomination for French, I must confess it has its own words of power and expression—*Ils s’ebranlèrent*.

“*Colonne, portez armes!*” continued the count, with increasing energy. The commands were given in French for the reasons I have stated in some previous occurrence.

“*Colonne, en avant—marche!*” cried the self-appointed general; moving on foremost towards the *Ponte Verde*, or green bridge, on the road to Piacenza.

Drums and trumpets gave forth their signals, the officers hastened to their post, and the mighty mass obeyed the impulse that one man had given. In this emergency Colonel Fedeli made his appearance from the other end of the square.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BIVOUAC.

Our bugles sang truce, for the sunset had lowered,
And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky.

THE SOLDIER'S DREAM.

HAD the worthy commander-in-chief, Colonel Fedeli, broken his leg, or at least sprained his ankle, so as to arrive only five minutes later—or, since he came in good time, had he well understood and seconded the spirit by which our youths were animated, so as to put himself at their head, and order out his regular forces, which were comfortably quartered at the citadel;—had we, in short, immediately taken the field with our whole host, what would the result of our expedition have proved?

That short, but well-fought scuffle at Fiorenzola, had sufficiently shown the capabilities of our people for soldier's work. All

that they required was, merely to be impressed with the conviction that they would now be led to open earnest war, and not be suffered to be caught napping again.

Had the *camisado* of the previous night been looked upon for what it most decidedly was,—for a breach of the non-intervention and a declaration of war,—the Italians must needs feel the necessity of either engaging in immediate hostilities, or else of laying down their arms and suing for mercy. This not merely for Parma, which was first attacked, but for Bologna and Modena, and for the whole of Italy, whether in a state of revolt or otherwise. As for what concerned ourselves, our course was as plain as could be conceived. Since the attack came from the garrison of Piacenza, it was our duty to march on that citadel, and if it was an absolute impossibility to take it by storm, to bring at least our four thousand men under its walls to keep the garrison in check.

Fate had decreed otherwise.

The column had not proceeded three steps, when, “Halt!” cried Colonel Fedeli, with a voice of thunder, and the column stood

swaying to and fro, like a field of ripe corn vexed by the summer breeze.

“Well, and whither go you, National Guards?” shouted the commander-in-chief, as he came on puffing and panting. “Who has a right to give orders here?”

Count Berardi turned and confronted him.

“Duty and honour alone give orders here,” he said. “It is good for broken-down veterans to take their ease, but we have no time to lose.” Then again waving his sword towards the expectant column, he repeated his command, “March!”

“Halt!” again roared the colonel. “Mutiny! treason!—Count Berardi, I arrest you in the name of—of—of the government.”

As he said this, the rash old man was about to lay his hand on the young mutineer’s cloak. The latter lowered the point of his sword with a countenance that boded no good.

It was an awkward moment; happily new personages appeared on the stage.

“Order, order!” cried a fine, rich, mellow voice, and the tall portly figure of Della Costa stood before us. The stately, though somewhat stooping figure of the financier, as

he leaned on the arm of the smaller, but more stiff Carmagnola, secured him at least a few minutes' attention.

“ Well, well, what is the row about ? You would go and meet the enemy ? The Lord bless you ! what do you know about the enemy's moves ? How can you say whether they come from west or north ? Defenders of the country, who remains to guard the the town while you sally forth on your fool's errand ? Are we all here leaders and rulers ?

There was something rational in what he said ; he was listened to with still greater calmness and respect as he went on.

“ We have done all we could in this emergency. We have sent our gendarmes to reconnoitre. Yet a few hours, and we shall know our real position. Meanwhile, we keep ourselves ready to start together. Order, my friends, order ! You shall go when you know where to.”

Our position was truly as embarrassing as he described it. The Austrians were but twelve miles from us all along the line of the Po. Had they suffered us to march on Piacenza, and then come suddenly upon our

defenceless city, they would not only have taken the city itself without resistance, but by cutting off our retreat, they would have us entirely at their mercy. Strategically speaking, our government were right enough. Only it was not by strategy that we could be saved; certainly not by dooming us to inaction, and appalling us by dwelling on all the terrible helplessness of our situation.

Those few words of Della Costa sobered us at once. We all stood abashed and irresolute, and even that presumptuous and riotous ringleader, Berardi, looked downcast and disheartened.

“Call out ten patrols,” said Della Costa, who knew so well how to assume authority, “each composed of a hundred willing men” (*giovani di buona volontà*, it was one of the pet phrases of the day). “Let them scour the country in all directions for five or six miles around our walls. The main body of our guards shall bivouac under these porticoes to take their turn with their comrades, and keep themselves in readiness against all extremities. Meanwhile we shall be able to ascertain the enemy’s intentions. At any rate, he will not again catch us in our beds.

Brave young men ! your rulers are watching with you.

“ Colonel Fedeli, you will please to take up your quarters here amongst your men.

“ Count Berardi — you have forgotten yourself, it would seem—you shall do duty at the palace to night; we will trust ourselves to no other guard—and we must put you out of further mischief.”

This mild and forgiving speech elicited the usual cheers. The two members of government withdrew, followed by the crest-fallen Berardi. Order was restored.

Our valiant commander-in-chief repaired to the great vestibule of the ducal library and academy, and there established his headquarters.

He called his staff around him, and gave the necessary directions for our nightly encampment.

Soon the porticoes of the Pilotta presented a various and animated scene. The ten detachments of volunteers for the patrols were picked out of the ranks, and started one after another for their several destinations. The others clustered their muskets—*formèrent les faisceaux*, as they termed it

in French,—and then looked out for the means of making themselves comfortable.

The stables, coach-houses, and other store-rooms of the late duchess's household, were close at hand, and some of our marauding young soldiers were sorely tempted to invade those hitherto inviolate establishments, and help themselves to sundry armfuls of straw and firewood, with which they flattered themselves to provide for easy beds and genial warmth for what promised to be a cheerless and dreary winter night.

They soon, however, found out that they had reckoned without their landlord.

Oh, the scowl of that imbecile Colonel Fedeli! to plunder the premises of absent dethroned royalty! He broke out into vehement invectives against the disloyal and sacrilegious conduct of those who had found their way to those ducal wood-cellars, compelled them to restore the stolen property, and declared that he would never suffer the cause of liberty to be disgraced by Jacobine deeds of pillage and robbery.

The people should, certainly, under no circumstances be allowed to lay a violent hand upon property. But a provident

revolutionary government must know how to do the work for them ; how to rob and plunder in their name, and for their benefit.

The gentleness and docility of our young men did not go unrequited. A few gentlemen in the neighbourhood stepped forward, and with due submission to the pig-headed chief, put their own haylofts and wood-cellars, nay, their larders, too, and wine-vaults at the disposal of the defenders of the country. Thus, at the close of day, the whole area of the *Pilotta* was turned into a vast banqueting-hall, lighted up by glaring watch-fires, and cheered by war-songs ; our people having, in the novelty of the scene, with true southern light-heartedness, forgotten all their excitement, all their consternation of the morning.

Fresh arguments of congratulation and rejoicing contributed, at every moment, to keep up their spirits and prolong those hours of revelry, which either their own good sense or the orders of their rulers ought to have made them aware, were better employed in recruiting their forces by a few hours of sleep, so as to be prepared for the events

with which the future seemed to be ominously pregnant.

The disbanded fugitives from Fiorenzola came in, one by one, or in small detachments, as they had chanced to meet in that disorderly retreat, and with one accord directed their steps homewards. Captain Gottardi having at last been joined by Pelosi and his small regular force at Borgo San Donnino, had deemed it unnecessary to detain any of the militia, so that they all successively made their appearance; and before daylight it was plainly ascertained that no more than fifty were missing.

Each of the fugitives had his own share in the action, his own personal deeds or mishaps, his own hairbreadth escapes to tell of. Each of them arrived with the most absurd notions of the extent of our losses, and considered himself almost the only survivor. They all were sure of a large, active, inquisitive audience. Notes were compared, news weighed and sifted, facts put to the test of sagacious criticism. It was amusing, sometimes, to see men, who were being reported dead, wounded, or prisoners, and that by eye-witnesses, make their sudden

appearance among the wondering crowd, by their presence giving flat contradiction to the mournful recital.

Then oh, the infinite deal of embracing, kissing, and shedding tears of joy! To so many and strange emotions that poor affray had given rise! amongst a people, too, who only twenty years before was drained of the whole flower of its youth, and whom it saw torn from the clasping arms of their mothers, bound on a long, dismal pilgrimage to the steppes of Russia, from which only a few blighted wretches were ever to return.

So easily will men, either individuals or masses, inure themselves to great evils, even when they show the least fortitude against lesser calamities. We never know how much we can bear till we are most severely tried.

Those who had outsped their comrades in their precipitate retreat, arrived, as I did, under the impression that the Hungarians must be riding close at their heels, and the alarm which my presence had created, was for many hours constantly on the increase. But when it began to be positively ascertained that the enemy had never ventured

beyond the Stirone, that even their vanguard had been summoned back to head-quarters, and finally, before noon even the head-quarters had been removed from Fiorenzola, and the whole host had quitted that town for their stronghold of Piacenza, it became a matter of incontrovertible evidence that they harboured no intention of pursuing their success any further. Our town was, therefore, safe for the present, especially as the mounted patrols who had been sent to the Po to reconnoitre, reported that nothing was stirring, that there was no condensation of Austrian forces, on the other side of the river.

Our young men—I am miserable to have to confess it—breathed freely. And when at daybreak Colonel Fedeli roused them from their pallets of straw, intimating that they were discharged, they were anything but displeased. “It was full time,” said the colonel, “that the good people of Parma should lay aside all groundless fears. The Austrians had no designs upon us—never had had any. If they came down upon us at Fiorenzola, it was only in consistence with the law of nations and the usages of war; a

garrison is by these empowered to repulse by main force any armed body that ventures within reach of their cannon, or even within the territory immediately belonging to it. By driving us from Fiorenzola the Austrians had only acted on the defensive; but so far from infringing the great compact of non-intervention, they had no sooner regained possession of their invaded territory, than they had fallen back, showing thus how scrupulously they respected the line of demarkation between the two duchies, and how clearly they understood the difference between their political and military rights."

The colonel concluded by thanking the militia, commending the promptness and eagerness with which they had answered the call of the country in the hour of need, and trusting that they would exhibit no less zeal and alacrity in cases of more serious importance.

I was struck dumb with amazement. "What," thought I, as with all the rest I shouldered my carbine and walked towards home. "What! the non-intervention for ever! Has the blood of our brave Modesti

been spilt in vain? In vain have so many of our friends been dragged in chains to Piacenza? Will those dotards trifle with us till all our ardour has cooled down and our enthusiasm is spent? till selfishness of home kills love of country? till we are all sick with disenchantment and despondency? Is it thus that they weary us out, like the silly shepherd-boy with false-alarm cries of 'wolf!' "

Filled with these all but agreeable meditations, I walked up to my room and threw myself on a bed where I had not slept for months. To take to my bed was with me tantamount to a renunciation of manliness. Had the Austrians actually given the assault at that moment, I doubt whether any consideration would have induced me to turn out.

From my own feelings I may argue those of my townspeople. So much had already been done to make us all sick of the whole business!

I had just fallen asleep as the first rays of the sun were making their way through the blinds, when there was a pull at the bell,

and the next instant Premoletti broke in upon me.

“Well, Castellamonte, my friend, how are you?” said he, with his wonted bustling, shuffling manner. “Hot work, wasn’t it at Fiorenzola? And a narrow escape we had, thank our stars.”

“Narrow or wide,” said I, “I am never glad of an escape; the word is too closely akin to flight.”

“Why! how very odd! Would you rather have been caught and dragged to Piacenza with a rope round your neck, and the prospect of being shot into the bargain? Well, Castellamonte, I just came to talk to you about this matter. Do you know more than fifty of our youths have been taken?”

“Have they?” I asked, with careless disdain.

“Ay, they have, and we receive appalling news about them.”

“Did they hang them?”

“Hang them? Heaven forbid! Why, you speak of it with as much unconcern as if they were a gang of highwaymen about to be executed for murder.”

“My dear friend!” I said earnestly, “I

contemplated the event of falling myself into the hands of the Austrians, though I would rather have done my best to fall *by* their hands. Had I been taken prisoner, I knew what I had to expect from their tender mercies. I think it behoves us to be ready for the worst. In our own eyes we may be heroes and martyrs, but our enemies would sooner spare a highwayman than a rebel."

"You take rather a philosophical view of the matter. The Austrians, however, know better than that. No! they dare not hang their captives, but they have dragged them away with ropes round their necks, so tight that their eyes seemed ready to burst from their sockets!"

"Woe to the conquered!" said I, laconically.

"Woe, indeed!" re-echoed Premoletti. "Our government, however, is bent on reprisals—Castellamonte, we want hostages."

"Hostages! what do you mean?"

"We must secure the persons of every one within our reach whose life may be precious in the eyes of Maria Louisa, or of the minions who followed her to Piacenza."

"Hush! for shame! Call you that a

strong measure? It is as useless and improvident as it is unjust and ungenerous. If you wish for reprisals, march on Piacenza, in God's name! but hostages? absurd! You will only get up a little reign of terror without the desperate energy that gave it some dignity in France."

"We will, we hope," insisted my friend, "lay hands upon men of high standing and importance in our enemy's eyes, on whom we may inflict such a treatment as our captives meet at their hands."

"A mean, poor, paltry resource," I exclaimed. "You provoke an enemy whom you dare not attack. Once more I tell you, if you want to retaliate, let us fall on the Austrians and take fifty hostages by strength of arms from their ranks."

"We have nothing to do with the Austrians. These prisoners are Maria Louisa's, and we have only to settle matters with her. To be sure, the Austrians are her shield and breast-plate; but we have the means of wounding her to the quick, notwithstanding."

"So be it then!" I cut short, quite disgusted. "Let me hear no more of it!"

Carry on the war in your own way, the task will be easy enough."

"Not so easy as you imagine. Castellamonte, listen to me! if the undertaking were not fraught with difficulty and danger, do you think I would have deemed it worthy of you? Listen, Castellamonte! we must lay hold of the bishop of Guastalla!"

I burst out laughing. "Oh! ah! a priest, a very formidable enemy."

"The job requires address and resolution, I tell you. That prelate enjoys great credit and popularity among the populace of his diocese, nor would it be easy to get at him, even in the most profound peace. Besides, you have to cross part of the Modenese territory, and there are rumours afloat of the duke of Modena having reappeared before Brescello. We may have to carry off the bishop through the midst of the duke's troops."

"Good God! and is it in moments of such awful perplexity, when we should take the field against that monster of a prince and his allies, that you would waste time and men for no better purpose than that of catching a bishop?"

"My dear friend, we cannot interfere

with the affairs of Modena without spoiling our own and the country's business. Meddle not, if you wish not to be meddled with! But as for Guastalla—that is our own territory, and we must have the bishop to save the lives of our ill-fated militiamen. However, I see what it is: the smell of gunpowder at Fiorenzola has proved offensive to our hero's nerves, and you are afraid of getting into untoward scrapes again."

"Devils and furies!" I cried out, starting up in my bed, for the hint was too broad, and stung me to the quick. "If you have no one else for your 'job,' I am the man; I regard it as a foolish and disgraceful expedition; but after all, the country has more need of my arm than my head. I will not give myself the trouble to think about the matter. Let your governors send me an order, I am but a soldier. Let my officers command, and I must obey. Only let the responsibility of the dastardly deed be off my head; do not come and reason with me, send your orders."

"These are the men we are in need of," quoth the diplomatist, chuckling. "In course of an

hour you shall have your warrant, and the friends who are to be sharers of your exploit. Farewell, I need not say that the enterprise requires expedition and secrecy. Good bye! you know you had occasion more than once to be glad that you suffered yourself to be guided by my experience. Adieu!"

I shook my head with dissatisfaction as he withdrew. I was about to abet, and to become principal agent of government, in what I considered its mean and unprincipled conduct. I tried to stifle all scruples by looking upon myself as a mere tool in the hands of the established authorities. I was rather flattered by the confidence placed upon me, for an enterprise which might indeed require no little discretion and energy, yet I could not help wishing that my discernment and activity might be tried on a more noble and worthy achievement.

However, I was in for it; and dressing in haste, I set about reloading my pistols and making other necessary preparations.

The bishop of Guastalla was a German by birth: from what part of the country he came, and what his name was, I had never taken the trouble to ascertain. I re-

membered seeing him often walking alone in the Giardino Ducale, with red stockings and a priestly collar, when he filled the important station of chaplain and confessor to Her Majesty Maria Louisa. She had brought the young, sleek abbé from the court of Vienna in 1816. He was tall, fair, blooming,—quite a love of a priestling. Gossip without end was spread about with respect to the real merits of this lucky man in the eyes of his imperial and royal mistress. Whatever might be thought of such rumours, certain it is that when, in the palmy days of General Neipperg, the ghostly adviser was dismissed, ample provisions were made for his future comforts. A little diocese was got up for his especial benefit, Guastalla, and the pope was directed to confer the dignity of the new mitre upon him.

How far Maria Louisa would now care for that mature and portly prelate, what chances there were that his arrest would stagger her in her resolutions, and soften her heart towards her prisoners, it was not easy to determine; the experiment was perhaps worth making; but that we had any right to lay hands on a defenceless, and

so far as we knew, inoffensive person, only because his imprisonment suited our present convenience, was to act in sheer opposition to my principles, which taught me that "men who aspire to be free should begin by being just."

However, in this case again, my vanity and thirst for praise prevailed over my better judgment. In less than an hour the written order arrived. It was delivered to me by my friend Premoletti himself, in the shape of a sealed despatch, directed to the municipal authorities of Guastalla. He gave me the names of the seven *amateur* policemen, who were to act under my orders; and added, that I should meet them at Porta San Michele (the eastern gate), where two travelling-carriages with post-horses would also be in waiting for us. It was important that the least possible *éclat* should be given to the expedition, and we were directed to steal as privately as possible out of the town.

I was pleased to see among the names of my comrades that of a young fencing-master, a pupil of our poor Modesti, and, like him, esteemed a man of a most determined character. His name was Scrivani, or rather—

as his mother *Frenchified* everything, and even contended that her husband's family was of French extraction—D'Escrivan. He was a small, thin, pale man, but gifted with a strength and activity that dreaded no comparison. His friends assured me he was a capital fellow; but he was boisterous and swaggering, noisy and familiar,—not altogether the man to my liking.

For such an attempt, however, as I had taken upon myself, I could not have found a more acceptable auxiliary.

As I was thrusting my pistols in the deep pockets of a great coat I put on for the occasion, a visitor was announced.

Who should it be but my good friend, Doctor Caluga, surgeon in ordinary to the castle and garrison of Compiano?

“You come in good time, my dear doctor,” said I, after an abrupt and compendary greeting. “The country has need of your services. Do as you see me doing: put pistols in your pockets, and come with me.”

“I have left my pistols in their holsters, with my horse and saddle, at the *Croce di Malta*,” answered the doctor. “But where are we to go?”

“Tush ! never ask, man, or you are unfit to serve our free and enlightened government. So, get your pistols, and come with me. To hear is to obey.”

He did not stop to inquire further. In a few minutes he came back, showed me his weapons, and arm-in-arm we walked to the town-gate.

There we found our men and carriages waiting for us. We took our places : D’Escrivan, the doctor, my young friend Rondani, fresh from Fiorenzola, and I, in the first carriage ; whilst the five others, all muffled in their cloaks, and armed to their teeth, mounted the other carriage behind.

And bang went the doors, crack went the whips ; the horns were blown, and off started the mighty convoy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CATCHING A BISHOP.

Veggio in Anagna entrar lo Fiordaliso,
E nel vicario suo Cristo esser catto.—DANTE.

CONSISTENCY ! Are there men in this world who can look back on the past with conviction of having always strictly and stoutly adhered to principle ?

The speciousness of palliative argument vanishes in the same measure as we leave our own actions behind us—in the same measure as illusion fades, and leaves us alone with our sleepless, ruthless inward monitor.

Live your life over again ! see how many of your sayings and doings will bear the test of calm reconsideration !

Catching a bishop ! Could love of action and thirst for praise alone have reconciled me to what I had voted an unjust and arbitrary measure ? Was there no other sly

motive lurking beneath that long array of flimsy arguments in vindication of the deed?

There was, alas!—and it was my relentless, indiscriminate hatred of the priesthood. Oh! those black sheep of the church! those white friars and grey! those slouched hats of the Jesuits, at the sight of which my blood boiled! Give me a bishop, by all means, since I cannot realize Nero's wish, and the hundreds of thousands of shaven heads in Italy cannot be dealt with as one head!

Ghosts of Henrys and Fredericks of Germany, of Philips of France, of Arnold of Brescia, Fra Dolcino Savonarola, and Fra Paolo Sarpi! Above all, thou hero of my heart, Sciarra Colonna, Pope-taker! the marks of whose iron gauntlet the false priest of Anagni still bears in his face! Write down my name besides yours! I, too, have laid a violent hand on one who styled himself the “anointed of the Lord.” I, too, have aspired to the appellation of the “Scourge of Priests.”

It was in this mood that I travelled to Guastalla; and I fidgetted in my carriage-

seat as I considered that short journey, and the priest-catching business at the end of it, as a first signal of a general attack upon our overgrown, overfed clergy : I hailed it as the dawn of the day when all Italy should rise against its ten thousand monasteries with fire and sword, drive the doting Pope and his purple retinue from the Vatican, and accomplish the work which even Napoleon left unachieved.

Even now, when blind animosity has cooled down to harmless antipathy, not a little of my anti-Levitical spirit has survived most of my prejudices on other subjects. How long is it since I have ceased to look upon that Jacobin recipe of “strangling the last king with the bowels of the last priest,” as the quintessence of all political therapeutics ? How long since I have felt satisfied that a monarch like Queen Victoria or Victor Emanuel of Piedmont, is “the best of republics ?”—but the priests ! I am still, like a Quaker, almost convinced that there is no chance for the Gospel on earth, till the last of its ministers is sent about his business.

The times seemed indeed fully ripe in Italy for the realisation of my happy dream.

The Pope's subjects were in open insurrection, and rapidly marching against the Vicar of Christ. It was loudly declared that they rose against him only as a temporal ruler ; but the altar in Rome is too firmly based on the steps of the throne not to be involved in its ruin ; the people and the church could not come to a reconciliation without a reform that would amount to a positive demolition of the old fabric. In 1831, as in 1848, the Italians have only given a hint of their intentions. No open declaration of war against the church has yet taken place : questions of vital importance are to be previously settled. The Italians cannot reckon without their landlords—without the Austrians, the French ; but they know what they owe their Pope and priests, nevertheless. Those black cattle are always in their power, to be immolated at full leisure, whenever the nation be suffered to have its own way.

Even in 1831, clerical influence had utterly subsided, at least in the towns : the unpopularity of that stupid, brutal, papal government had disgraced the whole hierarchy. The priests themselves, aware of the precariousness of their situation,

shrank like owls, from the coming light. The Jesuits of Modena, Romagna, and Piedmont, never stirred from their convents. The Franciscan beggar walked downcast and woe-begone. A few dapper priestlings affected liberal manners ; but I never knew one of them that did not mistake liberty for libertinism.

Not these alone, but even the monks of the old school might easily have been reconciled to the enterprise we had now in hand. The bishop was a German. Had he been racked, and burnt, and quartered alive, there was scarcely a Catholic that would have deemed it a sacrilege. He was a German priest ; and the very circumstance of his promotion to an Italian see, to the exclusion of the native clergy, had given an offence which still rankled in many a sacerdotal bosom. “Our priests,” thought I, “will thank us for driving the greedy foreigner from their own loaves and fishes. It is an ill wind that blows nobody good. The minion of Maria Louisa will make room for the chosen of the people.”

With these and similar thoughts dancing

before my mind's eye, I travelled towards Guastalla, happy and proud of an expedition, the management of which was solely trusted to my discretion.

Our tall, lean, and lank, but long-legged, Italian post-horses, carried us onward at a speedy rate. Our magnificent Lombard plain, as smooth and level, but also as trim as a billiard-table, spread before us in all its monotonous nudity. Divested of its green mantle, it scarcely exhibited any object to rivet our attention; yet there was something in the majesty of its unbounded, ocean-like extent, and in the dry winter-breeze that swept over its faded meadows, highly refreshing and exhilarating. The sun, too, shone in its full pomp; and although the mildness of the hour allowed us, in February, to ride in open carriages without shivering, yet every wood and field, every object in view was mantled with hoar-frost, melting and glittering in the meridian ray.

Presently, we arrived in sight of the Modenese confine, and were not a little cheered by the sight of the tricolor standard, which, contrary to the common report, was still waving from the ramparts of Brescello. We

had been told that a counter-revolution had been attempted, and the duke had retaken possession of that borough.

The moment our convoy was descried, a small band of national guards came forward to reconnoitre. We gave a good account of ourselves, and were allowed to cross that part of the Modenese territory, though we had to travel through it under their escort.

I looked at two of those militiamen, who, by their sashes, had evidently the rank of officers; and was struck by their pale and emaciated look, by the dimness of the eyes of one of them, and by a peculiar, wild glare in the visual organs of the other.

Our good neighbours had chosen the blind and the maniac for their leaders!

Ponzoni and Zoccoli! Only ten days before, the triumphant people of Modena had broken open the dungeons of Rubiera, where, with many fellow-sufferers, these two state prisoners were buried alive.

Talk of the horrors of the Spielberg! These two had been thrown into those horrid dens in 1824; they were then hardly twenty years old; in full possession of their manly vigour, distinguished for high spirits and

rare mental faculties. See in what a plight they come out six or seven years later! Ponzoni has dwelt too long in darkness to bear now the sweet beams of daylight. Zoccoli's brain has yielded to the constant attacks of the "deadly night-shade," a poison administered with a fell view to bring about delirium, to wrench a confession of his guilt, and of his accomplices, in unguarded moments, during those intervals of the soul's divorce from the senses!

And the prince that ordered those horrors, and watched over their execution, long lived and reigned. And all prospered with him, and he was suffered to die on his bed.

In February, 1831, the earth—that part of it, that is, that was the theatre of his cruelties,—was rid of his presence. These victims who now stood before us, it is consoling to know, never again fell into his clutches. I met them scarcely a twelve-month afterwards, helpless emigrants in France, Ponzoni striving hard to inure his eyes to the blessed sun; Zoccoli hailing with transport the faint twilight of reason that began to break through the long, dreary night of his understanding.

That soul-killing poison is called in Italy “la belladonna;” Zoccoli had a favourite jest—a sorry jest—with him: “that he could tell by his own experience how powerful *woman’s beauty* could be to unseat a man’s reason.”

In the company of these men we travelled across the five or six miles that divide the duchy of Parma from its little appurtenance of Guastalla.

The road ran here immediately on the bank of the Po; and that glorious stream, swollen by the thawing snows of Alps and Apennines, rolled its impetuous billows with such a vehemence as to shake the lofty ramparts that the industry of men raised against its ravaging fury. The river has here an extraordinary width; and as it winds rather abruptly to the south-east, it presents such an extent of waters, that the view is, as at sea, lost in its boundless surface. The low opposite shore is only seen here and there, at wide intervals, overgrown with long rows of Lombardy poplars, towering over the waves, straight, erect, compact, like a long array of combatants.

Beyond those waves, beyond that shore,

behind those forests, dwelt the northern rulers of Italy. Our old father Po seemed to roar with redoubled strength, as if willing to afford his sons more amply and safely the shelter of its broad-eddying waters. As long as that vast stream ran between us and the enemy, we could be in no dread of sudden onslaught. But alas! at Piacenza, at Ferrara, at Novi, and elsewhere, had not the Austrians, by the treaty of 1815, secured the passes of that river? The cause of our country had no bulwarks but the unarmed breasts of our citizens. Our hated rulers could fall upon us suddenly, irresistibly, from every quarter. Mountains, rivers, all natural boundaries, had long since been lost by the improvidence or the faint-heartedness of our forefathers.

We had soon crossed that part of the state of Modena, and on replacing foot on our lands, we parted with our escort. Yet a few miles' ride brought us to the gates of Guastalla. Our third little capital, the ancient seat of one of the younger branches of the Gonzaga of Mantua, was now in arms, and its militia was seen beautifully

arrayed before the walls, engaged in warlike exercises.

We gained admittance with little difficulty, and directed our postillions to ride straight to the Town Hall.

The *podestà* or mayor, as stout and portly a personage as any turtle-fed London alderman, received from my hand the official packet, containing, as I thought, the warrant for the apprehension of His Eminence the Bishop of Guastalla, and his delivery into our hands.

The magistrate, however, opened the packet, turned it over and over, then stared at me with an air of utter mystification.

“Surely,” I said, with pettish impatience. “Surely your worship can read.—Those state secretaries, I mean, write such a shocking bad hand,” I added, to soften my first insolent remark.

“It certainly takes a cleverer man than I am to decipher this, or to guess what it means,” said the mayor, handing the paper over to one of his syndics. The syndic shook his head, and passed it over to one of his colleagues. The precious document made

thus the tour of the room, and was at last returned into my hands.

The paper was blank !

“ I see what it is,” said I. “ It is most probably written with *sympathetic ink*,” for I knew our Carbonari had chemical preparations with which they made their correspondence safe against the prying of curious eyes. “ Surely your worship must have *the key* to it.”

“ I know nothing of inks of that sort,” replied the mayor, “ and am at a loss to guess on what errand you have come.”

I saw at once how the matter stood. Our provisional government wished to shirk the responsibility of that arbitrary arrest from their own shoulders ; and intended, if we could effect it, that it should stand forth as our own deed. I had no time, for the moment, to be angry at this unworthy stratagem ; being determined at any rate not to have come all that way to no purpose, I seized the worshipful magistrate by his coat-button, and drew him to the embrasure of a large window.

“ This is a matter that requires some discretion, Signor Podestà,” said I ; “ we have

come to take your bishop a prisoner with us, and we can only do it with your countenance and assistance."

"What! what! what! Our bishop a prisoner! Why, unless you produce your warrant to that effect, the very stones of our pavement will rise against you."

"But, sir, we did bring our warrant. It is most unfortunate that we should have to deal with a magistrate who can't read—"

"But I tell you—"

"Can't read official writings. I tell you our revolutionary officers write with inks of their own, and I am puzzled to explain how it happens that you should be one of the uninitiated."

The mayor looked bewildered. He turned the mysterious paper in every direction, held it against the light, before the fire—all in vain.

I availed myself of his perplexity and continued: "It is no use, Signor Podestà. You cannot make out the arcana of republican bureaucracy; but there is another book, in which experience must long have taught you to read. Look at me—at my countenance! Do you see in it the marks of subterfuge

and deceit?—well, then, I tell you, on my honour, we are here in compliance with an order of our provisional government, to effect the arrest of your bishop. We are armed and determined, and we will not go back without our prisoner. Now take your choice! Say one word and your town becomes a scene of strife and bloodshed. Let us alone, and we will do our job without you.”

“But, but, but—”

“Not a word, Mr. Mayor, not a word! No living man has heard our conversation. Trust me for once; you had better forget every word about it.”

As I said this, I bowed profoundly and left him. I held a brief consultation with my followers on the staircase of the Town Hall, and we determined on our best course with sufficient calmness and resolution.

The palace of the bishop was in the main square of the town, opposite to the Municipal Hall. One of our friends was left to take care of the carriages, and to order fresh horses; the rest in a body proceeded to the assault.

It was nearly three o'clock in the afternoon, and the servants were taking their

meal on the ground floor. Their master had then just risen from table. We found no porter in the hall ; according to the usage of the country the door was wide open ; we placed sentinels at the most important posts, and ascended the staircase.

The main body of my little troop was now reduced to three persons, but they were the very men I most implicitly trusted—D'Escrivan, the doctor, and Rondani.

We rang the bell at the door of the state apartment, and were somewhat surprised at the long and solemn silence that followed our summons. Finally, the door was thrown open, and a young, fair, and blooming, little priest, or *abate*, very civilly asked our business.

“ My uncle is taking his afternoon *siesta*, I believe,” answered the youth to our inquiries, “ but if you will favour me with your names, I will bring your message.”

“ Nay, we'll bring our message ourselves,” said I ; and, according to our preconceived plan, the doctor clapped the palm of his hand on the astounded young priest's mouth, we all fell upon him, gagged and bound him with our pocket handkerchiefs, and con-

signed him to the custody of our friend Rondani. So far so well. We proceeded warily from one to the other of the dark, gloomy, monastic-looking apartments, till we arrived at the door of a little library. "Herein!" said a soft velvet voice, as we knocked at the door, and instantly we rushed into the bishop's presence.

D'Escrivan entered first. He held his drawn dagger in his hand. His pale, but dark countenance was overshadowed by a fanciful black velvet cap, that gave his naturally bold and fierce look something more truculent and sinister. Caluga, who followed next, with his hooked nose and lantern-jaws, was no less ugly a customer, and the long holster-pistol which he drew from under his cloak as he entered and held at arm's length before him, was not by any means reassuring.

I entered last and unarmed.

The bishop was not at his afternoon nap, as his nephew imagined, but busy at his writing-desk—most probably reading his breviary—when his unwelcome guests unceremoniously broke in upon him. He was wrapped in a long-flowing black gown, but was otherwise

dressed in the attire suited to his rank. He was now, perhaps, in his fortieth year, and looked still youthful and vigorous enough to be—so far as mere physical strength was concerned—more than a match for any two of us. His complexion was fair and florid, and there was between him and his young nephew a family likeness that could not be mistaken.

The bishop very naturally imagined that no one but his boy asked for admittance, and he had addressed us in German; but startled by the noise of several footsteps, he turned round—only to see assassins with knives at his throat.

He turned pale—nay, a dirty yellow spread over the flabby skin of his face.

The sight of a naked stiletto has something appalling in the sight of a man of the North, who associates with it all his ideas of Italian treachery, cunning, and cowardice. The weapon in itself, however, implies no baseness or perfidy. Our artisans and mechanics lawfully carried such weapons in times of civil anarchy and oppression, when every one who wore the dress of a

gentleman was privileged to walk about with a long rapier at his side. The dagger was then taken up in opposition to the sword, and gave its wearer most assuredly no unfair advantage. Men even of the lowest classes in Italy, true to their republican reminiscences, will not even now put up with arrogance and insolence, and there are glorious instances in which the working-man's stab was given in return for the Austrian's blow. But the dagger need not be associated with treachery any more than the pocket-pistol or the English "Life-preserver." Those who have seen in the Transtevere at Rome, or the Portofranco at Genoa, two of our *facchini* falling upon each other with their clasp-knives, will conclude that that manner of fight demands warmer blood, but certainly no less courage than any other method of settling disputes. Nor is a duel between Mississippians with bowie-knives a more treasonable deed than one between two Englishmen with pistols, though both may equally be illegal and unchristian. The poniard may be a fit instrument of assassination, but even when used for that purpose, I should deem it less base and treacherous

than the pistol or rifle with which the victim can be struck from behind, at a distance, and with perfect security to the aggressor.

However, too much said on the subject. The bishop of Guastalla, as a good German, was unmanned at once, at the first glimmering of the naked ash-coloured blade of D'Escrivan. His very terror nearly cost him his life ; for, as overwhelmed by sudden surprise, after raising his arms wildly above his head, he threw them both on his table for support, my friends, thinking he stooped to seize some weapon that might lie before him, rushed upon him, anxious to overcome all resistance.

The truth, however, soon shone with full evidence, and the cadaverous paleness which had overspread the face of our helpless victim, the cold drops that oozed from his forehead, and the shiverings that shook all his frame, soon made us perceive that all violence was out of the question.

The hope of bending him to our desires by a little fright did, in fact, enter into our plan. And we had good reason to expect that, glad to escape from what he considered

immediate destruction, he would soon follow us in resignation and silence.

“Spare me, for God’s sake! I am innocent!” ejaculated the wretched priest, with an indifferent Italian accent, convulsively grasping the hand fellow to that which held the dagger. He seemed to see nothing but that cold steel. The pistol that could have scattered his brains at one blow, inspired him with less fear.

“In the name of the law, you are our prisoner!” roared the doctor in a voice of storm.

“You have nothing to fear from us, monsignore,” said I, in my softest tone. “Follow us without resistance, and no harm will befall you. The provisional government at Parma want to see you.”

“Ye—ee—es!” muttered monsignore, not yet quite reassured; then, suddenly raising his voice in a paroxysm of despair, “I am innocent! I am innocent!” he cried again. “Why, in Cot’s name, would you murder me?”

His shrieks went through my heart. My nerves never had much strength to bear other people’s pain; a weakness that would

utterly have unqualified me for a surgeon's practice. One of those shrieks also had only to reach the staff of servants below, to say nothing of the people on the square, and we would soon find ourselves engaged in a very unequal contest. Fortunately for us all, Caluga threw the skirt of his cloak on the prelate's face, and succeeded in stifling his cries.

"Hush, if you care for life," I then urged. "No one wishes to twist a hair of your head; you must ride to Parma with us. Such are our orders; but we are also bidden to treat you with the greatest respect. Your eminence is perfectly safe with us, unless you drive us to unpleasant extremes. It is in vain for you to call for help. Were even all Germany to come to your rescue, you will never escape alive from our hands. One more, one only more of those shrieks, and, by the living God, we plunge our daggers into your bosom. Self-defence will compel us."

The bishop listened and was dumb. I had spoken in a low, earnest, impressive tone, and found him a reasonable being. He begged to be ungagged, and offered to follow us without further opposition.

We had not two seconds to lose. My friends stripped him of his dressing-gown. D'Escrivan helped him to his coat, which was carelessly thrown astride a chair. That rough valet Caluga squashed the shovel hat on the bishop's head. I offered my arm to him with a cavalier gallantry, and we thus went to the door.

"Let the young gentleman follow us, too," said I to Rondani, who had been all this time taking care of the bishop's nephew. "His eminence will be glad of a trusty companion on the way."

We descended the staircase. No alarm had been given. We found our sentinels where we had left them. One of our companions, Del Mastro, a provident fellow, had had the happy thought of shutting and fastening the kitchen-door outside, so that the bishop's servants would, even in case of alarm, have been kept out of harm's way. Just as we reached the hall, the postillions, led by our man Romiti, were driving up to the door. The steps were let down, and the bishop was forced up into his seat. We jumped in after him and the door was shut.

So far so well ! We had only to wait a few seconds, while our companions took their places in the other coach.

The sight of two carriages, each drawn by four horses, and calling first at the Town Hall, then at the Episcopal Palace, in these troubled times, looked too much like an extraordinary event not to awake the curious attention of the citizens of Guastalla. The carriages had been followed to the post-house, where we had changed horses, and on their return to the square they were surrounded by several hundred idlers, wondering, questioning each other and the postillions, in vain attempts to solve the mystery.

The stout mayor was at one of the windows of the Town Hall, gazing at us with the same look of perplexity with which we had left him.

The bishop saw his advantage. The open air, the presence of the townsmen of his own diocese, revived his spirits. He made a sudden yet a vain effort to escape from the doctor's gripe.

“ My friends ! my coot beoble ! ” he cried, with all his might ; “ will you suffer your pishop to be slain pefore your eyes ? Help !

help ! I am in the hands of ruffians who are coing to murder me !”

The people drew up tumultuously ; our friends raised themselves up in their seats, threw back their cloaks, cocked their pistols or blunderbusses, which they had hitherto hid under their garments, and turned their muzzles against the people.

The people drew back.

“ Citizens of Guastalla !” cried I,—for, since my harangue from the balcony at Parma, I had become an orator in my own estimation,—“ Beware how you interfere with us. We are agents of government, bearers of an official warrant. There has been a battle between our people and the Austrians at Fiorenzola. We have lost prisoners, and must have hostages to answer for them. This, who calls himself your bishop, is only an Austrian, the minion of the Austrian profligate that reigned too long over us. Henceforth you shall have bishops of your own choice—twenty bishops if you like ; but—”

I hardly knew what I was saying, nor am I sure that many of my words were heard or heeded. The audience listened in wonder.

Discordant cries arose from the crowd ; but all we wanted was only two seconds ; and for that short time our firearms did us good service. While, overawed by them, the multitude kept aloof, tumultuously deliberating, the carriages were both manned, our postillions cracked their whips like thunder, and the crowd was left, still astounded, behind.

That stout mayor, also, was at his balcony, unable to make up his mind for good or evil. I waved my hand towards him with a look of triumph, and wished him a good appetite for his dinner.

Between two and three hours afterwards we were at the gates of Parma, where a large crowd was assembled, waiting for the result of our expedition, the object of which was no longer a secret.

“ Have you got him ? ” cried the multitude.

“ Have we ? ” shouted back D’Escrivan ;
“ d’ye think we would ride so far to no purpose ? ”

“ *Evviva !* ” shouted the sovereign mob.
“ Death to the blackbird ! death to the jackdaw ! ”

Blackbird, jackdaw, raven, and rook, are

the bywords by which the people express their contempt for the priesthood, an allusion to the sable hues of their robes.

The poor prelate sank back in his seat, for he took those idle vociferations literally, and expected every moment to be stoned to death or torn to pieces.

“Never mind them, monsignore,” I said; “it is only their way of bidding you welcome; it is only their stupid manner of joking; for the rest, these dogs never bite when they bark; and your eminence knows our townspeople:

“Parmesan, people of note,
With close fist, and wide open throat.” *

His eminence sighed deeply. The carriage proceeded, not without some difficulty, along the thronged streets, till we landed at the door of the palace of the provisional government.

* “Parmigiani,

Larghi di bocca e stretti di mani.”

It is one of the proverbial sayings in Italy: whether our neighbours mean thereby that we are more liberal of our promises than we are apt to make them good; or that we threaten more often than we strike, it is difficult to say. All these disparaging adages are of very ancient date, and had their origin amongst the feuds of mediæval municipalism.

I jumped from my seat, and made my way up to the council-chamber.

“My lords, here comes your prisoner.”

“Prisoner!” exclaimed Count Carmagnola, with affected surprise. “Is it then so? Have indeed our lawless youth carried their threats into execution? Do you mean the bishop of Guastalla?”

“The same prelate, my lord count. But if this has been done without your order or against your wish, why, the horses are to the carriages; the bishop can still sleep in his bed at his own palace ere night.”

“Come, come, count,” interposed Della Costa, with his usual frankness; “order or no order, the priest is here, and must not escape so cheaply. Castellamonte, thou art a deft *sbirro*, and deservest thanks and praises. Take that black raven to the *Hotel de la Poste*, and see that he is properly lodged. I say—you may just as well appoint a *guard of honour* about his person. Before evening I will sue for a *tête-à-tête* with thy prisoner.”

We drove round to the hotel. The bishop was shown up to the best apartments. We stationed ourselves at the door, and by

dint of persuasion dispersed the assembled mob.

Presently a detachment of national guards came to relieve us, and we were dismissed for the night.

Faithful to his promise, Della Costa closeted himself with the bishop, and, by his forbidding countenance and thundering voice, brought him passively and completely under his control.

His eminence wrote to his lady and mistress—*quondam* his penitent—stating how he had fallen into the hands of lawless rebels and anarchists; how it was merely owing to a miracle of Heaven that he had hitherto escaped assassination; and ended by supplicating her to use her prisoners with discretion and humanity,—as long, at least, as his own hide was there to answer for their lives and good treatment.

This letter, carefully revised, duly folded and sealed, was sent by express to its destination.

CHAPTER XIX.

DOUBTS AND MISGIVINGS.

Le cose della guerra andavan zoppe.—TASSONI.

I REMEMBER to have been told—the tale is rather free, but there is sound moral at the bottom of it,—of a jolly middle-aged bachelor, to whose care a young buxom widow was entrusted during part of her continental tour. They arrived one evening, and were obliged to put up at a wretched-looking inn on the Pyrenees, which boasted only of one bed-room for the accommodation of strangers. Of that apartment, the lady, of course, took immediate possession, and her gallant cavalier was to pass the night on one of the hard benches in the parlour-kitchen of the dingy *posada*.

It was in the heart of winter. Their supper had been cold and unsubstantial; the fire waxed faint and low; the mountain-wind

howled dismally through the chinks and crannies of that shattered abode; and, altogether, there was every prospect of a cheerless night.

Our fair traveller was tender and compassionate—in fact, a very widow. Her companion had, during the journey, made himself agreeable as well as useful. The *posadero* and his family had retired for the night, and those two were alone, crouching to the pale embers on the hearth, close to each other. Trembling with cold as much as with the violence of his emotions, the gentleman sued, whispered, hinted, wondered—“whether he could take up the oil-lamp, and light her to her bower?”

The lady, be it remembered, never said “yes.” On the contrary, she frowned and stared: still she suffered him to rise as she rose, to carry her light as far as the door—and beyond. There was something the obliging cavalier begged to unpin or unclasp for her. Briskly and gleefully did the comfort-loving bachelor skip about as he performed all the duties of an attentive *soubrette*. In short, he was a “lucky dog,” and the day—or rather the night—was won; when, all

at once, struck with a sudden thought, he smote his forehead.

“La ! I was forgetting my night-cap !”

He hurried to the kitchen, fumbled for less than a minute in his carpet-bag, and was soon back at the door of the widow's apartment.

The door was bolted !

With dropping jaw, with cap in hand, stood the hapless wight, like Adam at the gate of Paradise. But he knew women too well, bachelor as he was, to waste his breath in further entreaties and remonstrances, and repaired to his uncomfortable couch, muttering something about the folly of giving a widow even two seconds for reflection, or allowing an opportunity to escape.

Everything in this sublunary world depends on the nick of the moment. Every oscillation of the pendulum brings with it a new combination of circumstances ; and what was not only practicable, but perfectly easy, at the expiration of the hour, becomes sometimes an utter impossibility the moment after the clock has struck.

There was a time when, even with the scanty means within their reach, the rulers of the revolted states of Italy might have, if not secured the triumph of the national cause, at least done something for its honour—something for its future success. A moment had been, when, in the elation of victory, our youths believed themselves equal to the most desperate undertaking, and, on the strength of their faith, they would have thought no more of rowing across the Po, than Cæsar of springing across the Rubicon. But the critical moment had gone by. Afraid of that exuberant, no less, perhaps, than ephemeral, enthusiasm, the members of our provisional government sheltered their heads under the “Night-cap of the Non-intervention.” They took up a passive, defensive position; they tampered with that beautiful juvenile ardour and confidence; they threw cold water upon it.

The arrest of the bishop of Guastalla was the last sign of life, the last decisive act of aggression on the part of the rebels of Parma against their dethroned sovereign’s abettors and favourites. Henceforth, if nothing was absolutely done to propitiate

Maria Louisa's goodwill, nothing, at least, was attempted that might tend to awake her further displeasure, or raise new obstacles against future reconciliation.

A long period of hesitancy and expectation ensued. The good people of Parma continued in the tranquil but improvident enjoyment of their cheaply-gotten liberty, troubling themselves as little as they could with the contingencies of the future. The military spirit of our champions had abated: they still suffered themselves to be mustered on the main square in idle parade, and even went through the routine of daily manœuvres; but the order given for green uniforms was suspended; the subscription opened for the purchase of English muskets was unproductive: to all solicitations to similar purposes there was only one answer—of very great, though indefinite meaning—“What's the use of it?”

Faith was shaken in the hearts of many.

The old and wary shook their heads, looked grave and mysterious. The selfish and cowardly contrived to get out of the scrape as expeditiously as they had got into it. The young and hearty were, in frequent instances,

withdrawn from our ranks through interference of paternal authority, or weaned from the turmoil of public life through the suasive arts of maternal caresses. The home was everywhere supplanting the country. I remember a young comrade of mine who had slightly hurt his foot in his hasty retreat from Fiorenzola. His mother bribed a surgeon, who, under pretence of healing, converted that trifling bruise into a painful sore, and confined the young hero to his bed till the tempest was over !

“Heu bella, matribus detestata !”

The crowded streets were gradually thinned and hushed ; order was restored without effort. Country gentlemen rode back to their homes ; tradesmen minded their shops.

Not that every man was more willing to part with sweet liberty, either for love or money. On the contrary, all were anxious to make hay during that short spell of sunshine. Pamphlets, newspapers, bills, proclamations, were issued from the press with unwonted activity. Poor Pastori, an enterprising genius, sent forth no less than four programmes of daily, weekly, monthly,

and quarterly journals,—every one of which professed to fill up one of the manifold “wants of Italy.” Demagogues were thundering louder than ever from the *rostrums*. The theatre itself was converted into a debating club. The actors gave “Virginia, Timoleon, the Brutuses” every night, and the audience broke in with its wise comment and modern allusion. The “Romagnola” and its sister songs gladdened the air from sunset to sunrise. No one in fact dreamed of finding fault with that convenient order or disorder of things; they only felt less sanguine about its durability.

Still there was a class of men who either would not or could not draw back with the rest. To them the revolution was something more than an unmeaning holiday. These were especially the students and other youths who had shone most conspicuously, who had shouted most clamorously during those noisy events of the 13th of February, who had bullied Maria Louisa in the very hall of her palace. This one, it was said, had raised the first tricolour banner on the belvedere of his house. The other’s cockade had been first seen in the streets. There was a young

physician who had pulled the nose of the duchess' premier, a young lawyer whose green spectacles had haunted Maria Louisa's fancy ever since he appeared before her, signifying to her the "good pleasure of the University." These were pointed at as the doers of the insurrection, its visible chiefs and representatives. Children of the revolution, they must either triumph or perish with it. Upon their devoted heads, the sins of the whole country must be visited by their outraged mistress on her return.

These men were called the *compromessi*, and public rumour, glad of these scapegoats, magnified their offence, and endeavoured, with that charity which is too characteristic of mankind, to separate theirs from the common cause; for these, therefore, it was as dangerous to draw back as to rush on, and their suggestions were always dictated by the courage of despair. There were some of them, no doubt, who still hoped to shrink from a notoriety which they had courted so eagerly, to fall back upon that multitude from which they had so strenuously striven to emerge, to shun that public gaze in which they were formerly too happy to bask; but

others again scorned all cautiousness or restraint, boasted that they had broken with the old government beyond all chances of reconciliation, prided themselves on consistency, and would uphold the revolution at any rate, ready to stake town and country, no less than their own persons, goods, and chattels, on the chances of a final contest.

In this band of forlorn hopes I found myself enlisted, partly from choice, partly from necessity.

Up to my expedition to Guastalla, I had given myself no time for reflection. I had brought a good stock of youthful hope and trust with me from my prison, and would not suffer my bright torch of faith to be dimmed by the first clouds that darkened the horizon.

There are mornings for the early riser, when the sky is not only perfectly speckless, but when there is a bright and healthful vividness in the air that inspires us with a rash confidence that that beautiful serene is incorruptible. Yet, somehow, the sun is hardly risen before a haze permeates as it were through the

very substance of that deep azure,—and the pride of the morning is gone.

Again, I have sometimes embarked in the evening on a vessel scudding before the fresh breeze at the rate of ten knots an hour; delighted with that gentle rocking, braced by the fresh air, wondering what life could be happier than a seafaring one, stubbornly denying the existence of such a thing as sea-sickness. In this happy state of health and spirits, I have retired to my cabin, and sunk into such sleep as youth only knows of. But oh, the *reveille* of the morning! when the wind has fallen, the sea is high, and the rocking turned to rolling! Oh! the air of that black hole, and the stubborn supper the cruel skipper prevailed on me to swallow before I turned in.

A change of such a nature had come over my feelings; I had now leisure to look about me, and began to see things in their proper light. Cruel disenchantment!

Still I thought the game should not be given up without some great effort. Even admitting that our attempt was premature, and could not be attended with permanent success, even allowing that the revolt of the

13th of February was "all a mistake," as people now boldly whispered, I held it to be our bounden duty to expiate the rashness of the deed, to atone for the error by the sacrifice of a few hundred victims, with whose blood might be written on the gates of our surrendering town, "*Tout est perdu fors l'honneur!*" The fall of Modesti was ever before me.

To certain victory, a fortnight since, all our youth was ready to march. Out of many thousands, I wanted only a few scores willing to march "to certain death." There are men, I reasoned, whose life is not absolutely necessary: nay, if we come to that, where is there a man whose gap is not instantly filled up in the world? A few of these would hallow our cause, and of these I thought it my duty as well as my privilege to be one.

To these arguments, dictated by generous impulses, other more selfish reasons must be added, more immediately arising from the peculiarity of my situation.

I was, be it remembered, a runaway prisoner. The revolution alone had set me free; and the very mildest treatment I

might meet with at the hands of Maria Louisa's government, at its restoration, would be, to be sent back to that fortress of which rebellion had broken open the gates. Moreover, my harangue from the *tribuna*, and the arrest of Monsignor of Guastalla, must needs be construed into demagogical incendiarism and murderous aggression ; and even if they had not thought me worth my rope, they would perhaps have spared me more of their hard bread and water than I cared to feast upon.

Now, whether shut up at Compiano or Spielberg, or banished to Paris or London, Jerusalem or Seringapatam, one thing was tolerably clear, that I had lost all chances of breathing the same air with Sibyl !

Life is apt to appear of little worth in the eyes of "Twenty !" I had made up my mind to meet a glorious death, rather than expose myself to the eventuality of a second parting.

Fixed upon my purpose, I awaited, idly enough, the *dénouement* of what had now become a political farce. The Austrians kept their own ground, we ours. We did not know whether they prepared or meant

to attack us ; but, on our part, since we had laid aside every thought of taking the offensive, we had actually done nothing for the defensive.

Events had taken place, of no importance in themselves, and yet of a nature to confirm us in our treacherous security.

A short but lively sensation was produced by a proclamation from Piacenza, signed by our once-beloved sovereign and mistress, Maria Louisa, who, for the first time after nearly three weeks, giving at last symptoms of life, offered a free and ample pardon and oblivion of the past, provided her erring subjects would voluntarily and forthwith return under her maternal sway ; at the same time launching forth into threats and invective against such of them as would show any obduracy, and persevere in their treason.

This ducal mandate, our provisional government thought it their duty to reprint, and to publish ; adding, however, by way of commentary, a long apology of their own conduct, enumerating the grievances by which the old rulers had provoked popular dissatisfaction and violence ; dwelling on the

necessity which placed them at the helm of the state, with a view to preserve it from the horrors of unmitigated anarchy, and winding up by an appeal to the public, exhorting them to decide on their own fate, and pronounce between them and their former mistress.

The proclamation was read from the "ringhiera," amidst the roaring and hissing of the infuriated populace. All the terms of ignominy, with which our Parmese dialect is peculiarly rich, were freely heaped upon the name of the absent duchess; the boldest demagogues jumped upon the balcony, snatched the official paper from the hands of the terrified herald, and threw its fragments among their friends, who trampled them under foot, with loud cries of scorn and defiance.

Now, truly, even the most sober persons could not harden themselves against the belief, that such a powerless demonstration would not have been resorted to by the runaway duchess, had she not been utterly at a loss how to recall her people to allegiance by more coercive means. It was quite plain that her august parent, Francis of Austria,

dared not do anything for her ; that she was left to deal with her subjects as she best could, and her Germans could not or would not extend their protection any further than the Placentine garrison and territory.

The leniency, also, which, as if influenced by the deprecatory letter of her friend the bishop of Guastalla, the duchess saw fit to show to her prisoners, confirmed the idea that her only chance of winning back her metropolis depended on mild and conciliatory measures. Not only had those less fortunate heroes of Fiorenzola been rescued from the dungeons of the citadel, and lodged in more comfortable quarters, but yielding to the importunity of the most conspicuous citizens of Piacenza (who by their bold and generous demeanour fully refuted the notions still entertained by foreigners concerning the mutual jealousies and deep-seated rancours which are still said to exist between the different Italian towns, a consequence of ancient municipal grudges), Maria Louisa was compelled to allow them to alleviate her victims' confinement by every kindness that the most ardent sympathy and ingenuous hospitality could suggest, till, wearied with

their daily petitions, and harassed by remonstrances which assumed every day a more peremptory tone, she determined on the release of those prisoners, and, to our great surprise, she allowed them, one after another, to re-enter our walls.

This last stroke of policy ended by completely upsetting the very little that remained of our statesmen's understanding. It was now proved beyond all doubt, they said exultingly, that no hostility was contemplated; since, had Austria ever thought of attacking us, would she have suffered these youths, who had shown themselves willing and valiant combatants, once more to join the insurrectionary ranks?

The restitution of those prisoners was tantamount to a disavowal of that first step towards Austrian intervention at Fiorenzola; and if the Austrians retracted the first step, could they any longer meditate a second?

The illusion equally spread among our neighbours of Modena and Romagna. Our natural allies in those provinces had at first been startled by the report of the skirmish at Fiorenzola, and the bravest amongst them had burned with a vehement desire to march

to our succour ; but as that first aggression had no issues, and the storm had so unaccountably vanished away, the non-intervention bubble shone forth in all its gorgeous hues, and our friends relapsed into their former inaction.

A general council from all the towns of Romagna was convoked at Bologna, with a view to deliberate on the *déchéance* of the Pope from temporal government, whilst the insurrectionary bands, led by General Ser-cognani, slowly but irresistibly carrying everything before them, marched against the old metropolis of Christendom.

They had already occupied Narni and Terni, and reached Otricoli ; they were encamped at less than thirty miles from Rome, where the utmost disorder and consternation reigned, when they were met by a messenger of St. Aulaire, the French minister, intimating to their leader not to proceed one step further, as they cared for the protection and valued the alliance of France.

The insurgents halted.

Whilst the military operations of the Pope's insurgent subjects came thus to a dead stand in the south, no provisions were made

against the dangers that threatened them as well as us from the north. All efforts on the part of Modena and Parma to enter into a coalition with Romagna were unsuccessful—not indeed because any man there longed less than we did for Italian independence and unity, but because they feared that even a treaty of alliance might be construed into a breach of the non-intervention compact, and afford the Austrians a pretext for interfering in their turn.

Human affairs, I am well aware, derive much of their interest from the magnitude of the scale in which they are transacted. The Italian revolution of 1831, made but little noise in the world, not because it was less pregnant with important meaning, but simply because we had no men to give it full development. Had General Sercognani been a sufficiently dashing character to pursue his advantage, regardless of the frowns of French diplomacy, and had he entered Rome before the Austrians crossed the Po, as he could most assuredly have done, had the tricolour flag waved on the Capitol eighteen years before Mazzini was raised to the triumvirate there, we are by no means sure that

Louis Philippe could have ventured on the heartless line of policy pursued under different circumstances by Louis Napoleon. Gregory XVI. was not Pius IX. The new king of the French had not yet completely thrown off the mask; he had not yet come to a sufficiently clear understanding with the despots of the north: and if France durst not interfere, the Austrians were as yet too far, they were as yet too weak in Lombardy, and the ground there trembled still too threateningly underneath their feet, to be able to quell the fire in Romagna and stretch their conquests as far as the Tiber.

Nay, so utterly unready were they at this time, that if Sercognani, giving up the thought of Rome, had promptly marched back to Bologna and Ferrara, and thrown the armed bands of Romagna, jointly with those of Modena and our own, into Lombardy itself, the Austrians would most probably have been compelled to fall back from Milan and all the open cities and country, and never shown their face, except behind the walls of their strongholds of Mantua and Verona.

But our leaders in 1831 knew neither how

to advance nor to retreat. Their tactics were stationary. Sercognani tarried at Otricoli, as if St. Aulaire had cast a spell upon him.

Only one link of union between the three revolted states, Parma, Modena, and Romagna, existed, in the person of a common military ruler. General Zucchi had, on the first heat of welcome, been saluted as *generalissimo* of all the forces of Modena and Reggio, and the governments of Bologna and Parma had secretly established a correspondence with him, by the means of which it was understood that all general operations were under his immediate guidance. His plan of defence—supposing aggression to be still in contemplation on the part of the Austrians,—was as follows :—

Parma and Modena were considered as too helplessly exposed to sudden inroads to offer any chance of resistance. Consequently our national guards and regular forces, at the first attack, were to evacuate the town and fall back upon Reggio and Modena ; hence again they were to repair to Bologna, which was intended as a great military centre, and which, by its position and population, had more than once kept in check even larger

forces than the Austrians could now bring into the field.

The plan would have been plausible, if the Austrians would but fall in with the Italian general's views, and begin their operations with Parma ; enabling us thus to retreat to the eastward in the same measure as we were pressed from the west ; but such were not their calculations.

One evening—it was on the 6th or 7th of March, 1831—a vague rumour was spread at Parma that the duke of Modena had effected his long-contemplated counter-revolution, and had actually re-taken his capital. A few hours later, his highness and his troops were reported to have been routed by the patriots, and the tricolour to be again waving from the top of the *Ghirlandina*. (It is a marble steeple at Modena, one of the highest and finest in Italy.) Next, the tidings were that the Austrians were seen on duty at the gates of Reggio ; and, at last, on the following morning, it was bruited that the black and yellow standard of Austria floated on the bridge of the Enza—the boundary of our own state.

The provisional government of Parma were, it need hardly be said, in a state of distraction.

A young, handsome, high-spirited Tuscan, Labbri, the very man whose name has since risen so high in Europe, had chanced to come to Parma after the failure of insurrectionary plots in which he was deeply involved, in his native grand-duchy. In the midst of the present alarm, he had stepped forward and volunteered to travel by post to the invaded territories, and had reached Reggio, which he actually found swarming with Austrians, strictly guarded, and declared in a state of siege. The information he had brought back could not be more precise and positive; yet the infatuation of our people was not to be dispelled. They contended that what had been seen at Reggio were only Modenese soldiers in Austrian disguise; that our neighbours had only been imposed upon by the most shallow stratagem, but that the Austrians continued still as unmoved as if they were rooted to their own soil.

The poor, ill-omened bird, Labbri, was looked upon with that suspicion, of which

no friendly god, it seems, will ever cure the Italians. Those silly words "Austrian spy," "Reactionary agent," were murmured round, and they even began to question him as to the upshot of affairs at Florence, hinting that the Tuscan movement had miscarried in consequence of foul play on his part.

I had been much alone of late; sleeping, sulking, fretting. I came out of the shade in this emergency, and walked up to the provisional government.

"It is full time to put an end to such absurd uncertainties," I said. "Reggio is only fifteen miles off; Modena thirty. Have I your leave to ride out on an exploring expedition? I promise you you will be somewhat the wiser when I come back; that is, if I ever come back at all."

The leave was readily granted. I hastened home. My Hungarian steed had fallen lame since our retreat from Fio-renzola, and, although fast recovering, could not be trusted for the expedition I now contemplated. I went to the *Croce di Malta*,

the inn where Dr. Caluga put up, and inquired after him. He was not at home, and it was even as I wished. I looked out for the ostler, who knew me as a particular friend of the doctor, and who made no objection when I bade him saddle the doctor's mare. I knew I was risking the doctor's good graces for ever; for, as I have elsewhere hinted, and as he often boasted, "he would as soon have dreamt of lending out his wife;" but the public weal was at stake; and as I surveyed the slender limbs, and the swelling veins of that fine roan creature, I felt assured, if there is any faith in *blood*, that no horse in the whole town could serve me better at a pinch.

I hid my pistols under my riding-cloak, and trotted up to the *Porta San Michele*, the eastern gate.

"There goes Castellamonte!" cried one of the people. "The storm thickens, and he takes to his heels."

"Hush, for shame!" cried another; "he is a *compromesso*, and why should he bide and fall into the lion's jaws?"

"Nay, nay, my good friends," I replied, bitterly; "know you not whither this road

leads ? I am going to call on the Austrians, and ask them to pay you a visit ; and you had better get ready for their reception."

So saying, I gave the roan the spur, and cantered away.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SPY.

“Six gentlemen upon the road
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With post-boy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry :
Stop thief ! stop thief ! a highwayman !
Not one of them was mute,
And all and each that passed that way,
Did join in the pursuit.”

FEW districts in Italy—and if not there, I should like to know in what other region of the known world—have been more bountifully dealt with by Nature than that long strip of land which lies between the Apennines and the Po, down to the Adriatic ; and which, from the old Roman road that traverses it in all its length, derived its classical name of “Emilia.” It embraces both the duchies of Parma and Modena, as well as the provinces of the Papal State north of the Apennine, and was the main

theatre of those revolutionary vicissitudes of 1831, which I have taken upon myself to record.

This Cispadane region, or Emilia, has, then, all the fertility, without the flatness and sameness of the opposite or Transpadane Lombardy. The verdant ridges of the distant Apennine chain branch out in every direction, gracefully sloping downward with endless variety to the main road. Those ancient subduers of the earth no less than of its inhabitants—the Romans—drove their military highway right at the foot of the lowest hills, over the swampy ground which their industry rescued from the inundation of lawless streams. Upon those marshes, at the distance of ten, twelve, or fifteen miles from each other, their infant colonies arose. Each colony, by turns, became a thriving and populous city; and the time has been, when each of those cities constituted an independent state. Their power and glory, as well as their freedom, have set long since; but Nature, ever true to herself, continues to lavish her gifts with unbounded luxuriancy, and the population, whom either war or commercial enterprise had, in the olden times,

tended to condense and confine within their town-walls, have, in days of comparative security, gone back to the soil, whose unwearied productiveness was their last resource, and spread over the land, clustering in hamlets and villages, especially all along the main road ; so that the interval between town and town has often the appearance of a prolonged suburb.

These remarks chiefly apply to that part of the Emilian way I was now travelling through, bound on my exploring expedition to Reggio. Rich and blooming as our own Parmese lands may be said to be, they are little better than a desert, when compared with the hills and plains of the neighbouring territory. I had now crossed the bridge of the Enza, at the distance of five miles from our metropolis ; and at St. Ilario, a little village on the plain, about a mile further, I had set my foot on what the Austrian Duke of Modena rather emphatically called his "*Dominii Estensi*," though they are in fact only the wreck of the long-departed glory of the house of Este.

At every step, as I proceeded, the green of the meadows became a few shades deeper,

the grass grew more dense, and the timber shot up more boldly and majestically aloft. An air of greater comfort and plenty diffused itself over the land; the whitewashed cottages, most of them built immediately on the road-side (for even the Italian rustic is a social being, and courts the familiarity of the passer-by), were kept in excellent trim; the ark-like populousness and pretty confusion of the poultry-yards, the hugeness and sleekness of the horned cattle, and the glowing eye, the bronze-coloured cheeks of the gaping peasant girls, soon made me aware that I was riding over the fat of the land.

Whether tenanted or not, every cottage-door was invitingly thrown open; and though the huge oaken branch hanging on almost every third door is generally understood to be emblematic of the road-side inn or wine-cellar, yet hospitality is nowhere, perhaps, of a less venal description than in this region, where the labourer, blessed with God's bounties far, far above his wants, must be willing to share them with every one who applies for them in the Giver's name.

The people here could actually not get along without their beggars! They are as sure an indication of the rank fertility of the soil as the insects that buzz, chirp, and glow, and make the air and earth all alive with them.

Behind the cottages, behind the hedge of their gardens, the grounds immediately rise. From that first gentle, almost imperceptible, swell of the land, to the highest crest of the Apennine, for a long track of thirty to forty miles, it is only a slow, gradual acclivity. Here and there, where occasionally the descent of a mountain-torrent lays a larger extent of country open to the view, the eye can almost embrace the whole range of the hills, from the first wine-clad undulations bordering upon the road,—and oh! where do the far-famed festoons, the peculiar features of Italian landscape—where do the vine-tendrils more gracefully droop from their elms?—upward to the cloud-hooded summit of *Monte Cimone*, rising little less than seven thousand feet above the level of the Mediterranean.

It is a vast and imposing spectacle; and the picturesque ruins of numerous castles,

rising bare and bleak on the brows of beetling cliffs, add at every turning of the road a new variety to the lively landscape. Each of those spectre-like remnants of feudalism teems with the memorials of the past—not with some obscure, superstitious legends, such as illustrate the hawk-nest of a German baron on the Rhine, or the rude dwelling of a Highland chieftain near Loch Lomond, but with ever-verdant records of heroic names familiar to all who read ; whose fame is sure to survive the very corner-stone of the massive piles with which they are associated.

Behind me, on the left side of the Enza, I had left my own Castel Guardasone, deep in its dell, and the *Guardiola*, glittering, dazzling white, out of its laurel grove, like a pearl set in emerald. On the same side, somewhat below, is Montechiaro, with its four turrets, also light, bright, and gay as fairy-work. From these castles, five hundred years ago, issued, followed by their mailed partisans, Piero de Rossi on one side, and Azzo da Correggio on the other, to dye the plain with the best blood of the land. These men were not, by extent of territory or by

personal prowess, much above the northern lords, who equally did battle on the darker side of the Alps ; but it is a privilege of Italy that her most domestic incidents should be the theme of general history. Under shelter of those tyrants' sway, not far from those castles, one of the givers of immortal renown once lived—Petrarch, whose peaceful retreat, whose Italian Vaucluse, or Cisalpine Parnassus, as he called it, lies yonder in that silent valley, bearing the name of *Selva Piana*, where the ploughman will still show you the poet's cottage and his solitary walk.

Opposite, on the other bank of the Enza, you may see Canossa, Rossena, and the other castles (*I quattro Castelli*) ; the tenements of that high-souled countess, Matilda, who did so much more for the Church than either Constantine, Pepin, or Charlemagne. Canossa, the favourite residence of this countess-queen, after eight centuries, stands still sound and entire. On the broad flagstones of the castle-yard you see the spot worn out by Henry of Germany, when that proudest of emperors knelt there for three days and three winter nights, suing in vain for a reconciliation with a still prouder

Roman pontiff. Three days and three nights did the stubborn Hildebrand sit inexorable in the castle-hall, deaf to supplications, unmoved by all solicitations save by those of his noble hostess ; and when at her request the kaiser was finally admitted into the pontifical presence, and writhed on the dust, the ruthless priest laid his foot on the anointed head of the prostrate monarch, achieving for his order a triumph which his successors are still reluctant to forget.

Not many miles further, hidden among the vines, whose juice makes its name so dear to epicures, lies the castle of Scandiano, once the home of Matteo Maria Boiardo, a believer in knight-errantry, who invented fables and revered them as truth. Among the tenants of these fair domains, the descendants of those good peasants are yet to be found, with whose high-sounding names the poet delighted to christen his Paynim heroes, *Mandricardo*, *Gradasso*, *Sacripante*, *Balugante*, and all their fraternity : only for one of them, for the most tremendous of the whole host, he was at a loss how to find a proper appellation ; and it was only by chance, that whilst hunting in these woods,

he bethought himself of RODOMONTE ! Soon giving his horse the spur, and crying out *Eureka !* with all the might of his lungs, he galloped back to the castle, ordered the bells to be rung, and the cannon fired, as if for the canonization of a new saint.

A few years later, at a few miles' distance, the man was born who was to take up Boiardo's narrative, where death had snapped its threads asunder, and whose new web was to throw the warp and woof of the original weaver into comparative oblivion. The entrance of an humble house near the citadel of Reggio, bears this significant inscription : "*Qui nacque Ludovico Ariosto !*"

I have designedly lingered on the road, only to make the reader aware that there are interesting spots in Italy besides what is set down in guide-books. Here, in a ride of less than ten miles, and scarcely ever deviating from the highway, many a bright page of Italian history and literature, he who runs may read. Many an object, besides Parmesan cheese and Bologna sausages, are worthy of the tourist's attention, in this beautiful region of the Emilia. How many enterprising English travellers ever heard of

Canossa, or what distinct knowledge have even scholars of the site of Boiardo's castle, at Scandiano, or Petrarch's hermitage, at Selva Piana? Our Apennine, fully as picturesque as that of Abruzzo or Umbria, much more unsophisticated and virgin, is a *terra incognita* to the swarm of curious pilgrims; cottage and barn doors, away from the high-road, have neither locks nor bars; highway robbery and other startling crimes, unless we reckon smuggling among them, are never heard of in those valleys: the absence of foreign visitors, and unacquaintance with foreign gold, prolong there the existence of a golden age, which it may be as well perhaps not to intrude upon.

But to our tale. I had ridden very leisurely all the way from Parma to St. Ilario, anxious to husband my horse's strength, not knowing what exertion might suddenly be demanded of her.

The doctor's famous mare was middle-sized, more than fifteen years old, extremely well broken, and sober. She walked steady and demure, with her nose on the ground, and no one could have guessed, on a careless

inspection, the fire and spirit that mere nag could put forth in a case of need. By habit and experience she had learned to husband wind and bottom; she knew not what frisking or capering was; she was her rider's friend, a true Arab,—she could creep along like a donkey, and could race with the wind.

I travelled slowly and cautiously, surprised and not very easy at finding neither the Austrians nor yet their enemies on the border. The road was deserted, the comely house-wives and tidy maidens, that stood at the door of most cottages, gazed silently at me, with but few of those ready smiles and good-humoured salutations, on which, in ordinary times, the stranger can almost invariably rely.

I knew it was of no use to address either these fair spinners or the more knowing publicans about the state of affairs, for, uncertainty, uneasiness, and painful curiosity, were painted in all their faces, and, had they dared, they would most probably have turned to myself, or to any chance wayfarer, for information. So I passed by them leisurely, keeping a sharp look-out before me, and reached the bridge

of the Crostolo, two or three miles from Reggio, perfectly ignorant whether that place itself was still in existence.

Just on the bridge, at the distance, as I said, of about two miles from the gate of the town, I came up with a fat old priest, who was journeying in the same direction, mounted on a prodigiously large ass, which, lusty as he was, groaned under the clergyman's weight, somewhat like Charon's barge when freighted with live stock, in the sixth book of the *Æneid*.

"Good morning to you, Don Gaetano," I said, trying boldly to guess out his name. Some people bear, as it were, their own name written in their outward look.

The priest started; I had made a good hit.

"You have no time to lose, I am thinking, if you wish to say mass before noon," I continued.

The priest stared.

"Masses sell well at the cathedral, Don Gaetano," I went on with familiar impudence. "The job is worth a *scudo* any time, is it not?"

"You are a pretty young gentleman," said the priest, somewhat nettled; "and

well informed about other people's concerns. Mass is said and done for to-day, *Deo Gratias*, but I must make haste, as you say, or I shall be too late for the *Te Deum*."

"The *Te Deum*!" I exclaimed. "What! to celebrate the Jesuits' expulsion from the college of Modena?"

"To solemnize his highness's happy return into his states," quoth the priest, gravely and bitterly, "and to put an end to those scenes of tumult and scandal by which young sparks like you have startled all good Christians."

It was now my turn to wince. There was an itching at my fingers' ends, as if I would very much have liked to twist the rascal's neck; but pumping him out was now my all-important business.

"Soh! your *Duchino* has come back, has he? Good tidings for the gentlemen of your cloth, Don Gaetano! And pray did he lead only priests and monks to the conquest of his states?"

"He led his own good battalions," said the priest, loftily, "and the troops of his august cousin the emperor of Austria, whom Heaven in his mercy protect!—It is true

that the clergy did all their best to help him with their prayers."

"Ahem!" I exclaimed, sulkily; "may the good duke remunerate his priesthood with the same meed as he awarded to Don Innocenzo Malerbi!"

Don Innocenzo, a priest of great integrity and virtue, was condemned to death as a Carbonaro, and suffered with rare heroism at Rubiera, in 1821. The clergy of the duchy, no matter of what party, never forgave the prince this daring breach of all the fancied privileges of their order. The execution was not heard of without a frown at Rome itself.

The priest looked at me with a smirk.

"You are an arrant brigand, my young friend, I see," quoth he; "but for all that we won't quarrel: and rot me, my dear fellow, if I would not rather a thousand times say mass for the duke and emperor's soul, than sing a *Te Deum* for their victory. But hang it, why didn't you hold out more stoutly? We country parsons were all in your favour. But we cannot conjure back an Austrian regiment, as we would exorcise a legion of devils. Holy water has no power over car-

nal weapons, you know; and, hang it, the *Te Deum* will be a showy affair, and the alms are six Modenese *lire*" (little above a shilling) "apiece."

"It is a mighty temptation, to be sure," said I, humouring his priestly selfishness. "But," I added, "the Austrians—have you seen them? Where are they? How many are they?"

I was sure of my man, and knew that the abrupt interrogation would not startle him. The fact is, the cunning shaveling had well-nigh guessed my errand already.

"Have I seen them?" he echoed. "How should I, if they just took up their quarters in the citadel this morning? But I have seen two or three of the cockaded young gentlemen from town, who had just cut their stick the moment the gate was closed and the town put in a state of siege."

"The gate closed! And how, in the name of all wonders, do you expect to get in then? You are no spirit, and your ass no goblin, meseemeth, that you may hope to pass through the keyhole."

"Ha! ha!" sneered the priest; "you little know the wonders that this collar and

hat have power to operate. The Austrians—to give the devil his due—are a pious and reverent race. No sooner had they settled in their barracks, than they issued orders for a general thanksgiving, and invited all the priests of the environs to officiate.”

“Good customers, the Austrians, Don Gaetano,” I said, rather at a loss how to proceed. I shifted the subject, with a happy versatility, however, and mentioned quails, beccaficos, roast chestnuts, and wine of Scandiano. I descanted on country cookery with a connoisseurship that astounded myself, and made the mouth of that priestly glutton water.

The eyes of the reverend epicure glistened, and I saw that he had forgotten both brigands and Austrians, the cathedral and the *Te Deum*, when we got in sight of the *Angelo*, a pretty suburban inn, half a mile from the gate.

Here it was necessary for me to halt; and I was resolved that my fellow-traveller should stop with me.

“Don Gaetano,” I said; “you have said mass, and, I dare say, broken your fast; but I am perfectly starved; and I know I can-

not get such pork-chops anywhere in Reggio as they'll give me at this house."

"*Braciuoie*," said the priest, "are a good thing. And you are right, my young sir: they do them to a nicety at the Angel.—True, true, I have had a mouthful ere I left home,"—and he sighed woefully.

"Bah! bah! the ride and this sharp mountain-breeze will have made you forget your 'mouthful' long since. Come!" said I, for I saw him willing enough to fall into the snare. "Come!" I said, pointing at the sundial, which, according to the Italian custom, was casting its monitory shade on the whitewashed wall of the inn, "it is not gone twelve yet, and your *Te Deum*, you tell me, is ordered at three. Come, a couple of chops are soon broiled; and we will call for the landlord's oldest Scandiano."

The priest pulled in the reins. "Well, I do not know, but I have time for two minutes' rest; but as for the Scandiano, my brave youth, hang me" (Don Gaetano was fond of these uncanonical expressions), "hang me if Bertoldi, the innkeeper, can give us such a drink as I can supply you

with, if you will do me the honour of *coming to do penance** at the rectory."

"A bargain, Don Gaetano," cried I. "Let us see what we can get at the Angel, and we'll keep a corner for the rectory wine in the evening."

The good priest needed no further pressing. Aided by two of the ostlers and waiters, he let himself down from his trusty animal, freed himself from the ample folds of his round mantle, threw it down with his tricornered hat on an old arm-chair, on the entrance, and made his way with the freedom and *nonchalance* of an *habitué*, into the little parlour, where he threw himself into a capacious arm-chair, puffing and blowing, and wiping himself with his snuffy handkerchief.

Lord! what unclean brutes these priests are apt to be in Italy, when they are not the most consummate of rogues!

I tarried awhile outside the inn to give some orders respecting my nag, and joined my companion just as the bustling landlord, in as short a time as might reasonably be

Far penitenza, a modest phrase in Italy, to invite people to dine, or otherwise to feast at one's house.

expected, returned with the *braciuele* smoking in a pewter dish, and the Scandiano sparkling in a flask, the neck of which was made in the shape of an inverted cone, and bore a close resemblance to the muzzle of a blunderbuss. Such are used in the duchy of Reggio. Every Italian town and province has its own shape and fashion for such things.

And now my object was attained. The fat priest was sniffing the savoury dish before him with scarcely good breeding enough to wait till I invited him to fall to. Neither the orders of his bishop, nor the Pope's presence, scarcely perhaps thunder and earthquake, and the roof tottering about his ears, would have power to raise him from his seat now.

That Italian cookery is indeed irresistible, is it because no present enjoyment can stand a comparison with the pleasures of memory, or is it indeed true that all the pork-chops I ever tasted abroad are mere leather and grease by the side of the delicious *braciuele* we used to relish so keenly at home?

I withstood the temptation in this instance nevertheless. "Excuse me yet

a while, Don Gaetano," said I, starting up suddenly and walking to the window, when I saw the priest's eyes riveted on his platter. "I must see what the deuce is the matter with my horse. Help yourself, I beg, while the chops are hot. I shall be with you in a minute."

With this I darted from the room, snatched up the priest's hat and cloak in the hall, and laying hold of the mare's rein—she had been hastily fed, and by my order tied to a ring outside the inn-door—I mounted and rode stealthily away.

The priest's mantle was so very large and long, that when I buttoned it round my neck, its wide skirts fell down almost beyond my heels and stirrups, and so completely hid me and my horse, that as that grim wag of Dante has it,—

"Down the palfrey's sides
Spread their broad mantles, so as both the beasts
Are covered with one skin."*

The tricornered hat was also of the most ample dimensions, and as I palmed it down upon my brow, my face was so eclipsed by

* "Cuopron de' manti lor li palafreni,
Si che due bestie van sotto una pelle."

the broad brim, that the disguise was complete, and I was to all intents and purposes fit to play Don Basilio in the opera.

In this plight I arrived before the gates of Reggio.

Reggio is a quiet, neat, tolerably dull provincial town, dull to all but its fifteen or seventeen thousand inhabitants, who are warm-hearted and noisy enough to make Sahara itself alive with their merriment. Uncouth, hardy, and light-hearted, they might aspire to the appellation of the Irish of Lombardy. They are on the whole well liked by their neighbours, with the single exception of the Modenese, who, besides ancient republican rivalries, are a perfect contrast to their fellow-subjects by their hang-dog saturnine disposition. As far back as the days of Ariosto the distinction was remarkable, and the poet sang—

“ Reggio the gay, and sullen Modena.”*

The Reggiani go by the name of *Teste quadre*, or “square-headed people,” — a *sobriquet*, as Tassoni, who was a Modenese,

* “ Reggio giocondo e Modena feroce.”

informs us, which dates as far back as the wars of Frederick II., when the poor warriors of Reggio had to submit to the knock of the halbert of Mars, and had their heads flattened into the shape which has been perpetuated in after-generations.

Round or square, however, the heads of the Reggiani have in many instances proved to be among the soundest and longest in Italy; and as the mercurial and sulphurous temper of that people is apt to lead them into all sorts of scrapes, and makes them ever eager for innovation, they have at all times taken the lead in all Italian commotions; especially during the French inroads in the age of Napoleon, when the town was the first to declare for the republican conquerors,—a circumstance which favoured the promotion of many of its citizens in all civil and military capacities, and made them, to a great extent, the rulers of the kingdom of Italy.

Crushed, but not subdued, by the iron rule of that infatuated Francis IV., after the restoration of 1814, the Reggiani showed themselves arrant rebels whenever an opportunity offered. In 1821, the whole town, with

monks, priests, and the very Jews, were Carbonari : nor were the ranks of the rebels so effectually thinned by wholesale proscriptions, but several of the old and a new generation of conspirators remained, to play a brilliant part in these troubles of 1831.

From the 4th of February to the 5th of March, there had been but one clamorous, drunken carnival at Reggio,—a jolly season, which had just been put an end to not many hours previous to my arrival, in priestly garb, at its gates.

The battle of Fiorenzola had, it is true, considerably damped the fine spirits of that thoughtless people ; and the dispositions of General Zucchi, a native of the place, and the timid and evasive measures of their provisional government, had there, as with us at Parma, spread their chill among the people, and prepared them for the chances of that final day which was to bring back Francis IV., and with him a long reign of terror and desolation.

The youthful and brave, the *compromessi*, had either already migrated to Romagna, or were kept in readiness to march *from* the enemy on his first appearance.

On the 5th of March, the little army of the petty duke—those twelve or fifteen hundred men whom he had taken with him in his flight into Austrian Lombardy, on the first panic of the insurrection at Bologna,—had crossed the Po as a vanguard to a strong body of Austrian regiments, and directed their attack upon Novi. The great river above named was not here the boundary-line between Lombardy and the duchy, as the Austrians possessed a narrow strip of land on the right or southern bank. That little frontier town of Novi was garrisoned by a small band of volunteers from Modena and Reggio, at the head of whom was a man of great daring, by name Morandi, famous in Italy for the assassination of one of the duke's police-officers, decidedly the most startling deed of that kind that was ever perpetrated, previous to the murder of Rossi at the Quirinal.

That able and undaunted leader, who had expiated that ill-shed blood by lavishing his own in a hundred encounters in Greece and Spain, had chosen a strong position, and pouring his own brave soul into the hearts of his young followers, awaited the onset of

the ducal troops. To their eternal disgrace be it written, the regiment of Este, unmindful of the thousand loaves of dark bread with which they had been fed in their sovereign's service,—in the very eyes of that sovereign himself, turned their back upon those three scores of undisciplined young riflemen, and fell back on the main body of their Austrian confederates.

These, a large body of five thousand men, came with great leisure and order to the rescue. Morandi sent messenger upon messenger to Modena for reinforcements. The Modenese government sent order after order for his immediate retreat; and that valiant man, seeing the stark madness of sacrificing the lives of that little devoted band in so hopeless a contest, was finally compelled to comply with his rulers' wishes, and fell back upon the capital.

Here the orders for a general retreat were hastily given. The *compromessi* of Modena and Reggio, amounting to some nine hundred, well armed and equipped, and followed by their provisional government with their families,—for women and children had often to stand their trial for high treason under

Francis of Este—bade a sorry farewell to their native homes, and departed for Bologna in full expectation of trying the fortune of war on the Papal territories.

Scarcely had these fugitives disappeared from the eastern gate, when the invading troops advanced from the north. The revolutionary standards, of course, were instantly struck, with the exception of the great *Gonfalone* on the top of the *Ghirlandina*, forgotten, perhaps, as it was so near the sky and almost hid in the clouds, or perched too high, perhaps, and on too dangerous a pinnacle, for the unwieldy invaders to reach it.

The invaders entered into a silent and apparently uninhabited town; shops, windows, houses, and taverns, all but the churches, were shut up. Midnight stillness reigned under the glare of the mid-day sun.

The order of march had been inverted since the disaster of Novi. The duke and his useless soldiers were sent to the rear-guard, and came in with the tail. As his highness's carriage drove up to the door of his magnificent marble palace, the Hunga-

rian bands sent forth their strains of victory. After a few minutes' rest, Francis IV. repaired to the cathedral, directed a "Te Deum" or thanksgiving to be sung by his loyal priests, and almost in the same breath issued orders for numberless arrests. He also wished that a scaffold should be erected, and sent his own confessor—a rare honour—to Menotti, Borelli, and others of the prisoners whom he had dragged along with him to Mantua and back—to prepare them for execution.

Of these events, on which I have dwelt with some minuteness, because they belong to that epic of Italian patriotism which, under different forms is perpetuated in the country to the present day—we had but an imperfect and contradictory knowledge at Parma. The authentic particulars now broke upon me by a variety of means, and from several sources as I advanced.

Reggio had been occupied twenty-four hours after Modena. As I drew near the gate, I descried the white uniforms of the Imperial infantry on duty; and near a small picket of these troops were two of the duke's own myrmidons, dragoons, or gendarmes,

who had alighted, and held their horses by the bridle.

These men were armed with a heavy helmet, carried a long musket at their saddle, after the model of the original German dragoons, and were intended equally for service on foot or horseback.

Prudence would have suggested a timely retreat, for the fact spoke sufficiently plain; but as our people had been kept sufficiently on the rack by vague tidings, I felt it incumbent on me to bring a more circumstantial account of the enemy's forces and intentions; and, especially, to ascertain whether these were real Austrians in flesh and bone; or, as it was bruited at Parma, mere ducal rascallions, mere asses under a lion's hide, so clad in order to strike awe into the population by a mock show of Austrian interference.

Possibly, also, love of adventure and spirit of bravado, had something to do with that resolution of mine—to push my inquiry on into the town itself.

The gate was not indeed closed; but—as it was natural on a first occupation—so kept ajar by the soldiers on duty, as to admit a

horseman, or even a carriage, so long as such was the pleasure of those surly gatekeepers.

The town being in a state of siege, ingress or egress could only be obtained by the means of a pass signed by the Austrian commander, no less than the local authorities. Still, as Don Gaetano had sensibly observed, exceptions would be made in favour of *my cloth*. The Austrian sentinels fell back to make way as I went through ; and even the Modenese dragoons—though the sight of a priest mounted, even on the humblest horse, is rare indeed in the cities of the plain, where they keep a gig—concluding, I suppose, that I had ridden from the hills, suffered me to go past, satisfied with a strict professional scrutiny.

So in I was, and, full of glee at the success of my scheme, I rode boldly on towards the market-square, that unavoidable centre of all Italian towns, little caring, for the moment, to resolve the great problem—how I should get out again.

The town of Reggio, all my recollection of which was associated with its lively May fair, when thousands flock here from all parts of Lombardy, was deep in mourning.

I might, for any living soul I met, have ridden in the streets of Pompeii. As I drew near the square, however, I was surrounded by a straggling crowd, of the very lowest classes, walking in the same direction with me.

On the square I found Austrians, cannon, and other instruments of destruction.

The Austrians were Austrians indeed. Had I even been blind and deaf; had I neither seen their round faces, fishy eyes, and lowering brows; had I not heard the variety of their harsh, guttural accents, the blood that boiled in my veins would have made me aware of their presence.

The attention of the people was attracted by a large placard, stuck up at the door of the Town Hall.

I alighted from my horse, and threw the reins over the saddle, satisfied that the patient and intelligent creature would not stir from the spot.

I made my way through the more stupified than sorrowing crowd, and read the following

“PROCLAMATION.

“We, Francis IV., by the grace of God,

Duke, etc., having by the aid of an All-Merciful Providence, as also by the instrument of our valorous troops, and those of our august ally the emperor of Austria, etc.——”

I read no more ; but stretched forth my hand, seized a corner of the still moist bill, and tore it down from the wall.

There are instances in which the body acts in anticipation of the soul. Blows are dealt and words uttered, under the mere mechanic impulse of the nerves, without consent, or, indeed, consciousness, of our thinking faculty.

This was one of those moments. Was it a wanton desire to offer an insult to the majesty of the duke ; was it powerless rage at the sight of his easy success, that prompted me to that deed of useless rashness ? I know not. The deed was done ; and there I stood with the paper hanging in my hand, almost unconscious, till one of the *sbirri*, or policemen in plain clothes, that hovered round, laid his hand on my shoulder, crying out—
“ Treason ! ”

This aroused me ; I bounded on the man suddenly, and thrust him back on the

crowd; then rumpling the paper and thrusting it in my bosom, I broke through the crowd, and jumped on my horse.

“Stop thief! stop thief!” cried the policeman, whom my deed and my habit had thrown into a moment’s perplexity; but who now had at last made up his mind, and hastened after me. The people followed in a crowd.

“Stop thief!”—the fatal cry had its effect. At every turning of the road the train of my pursuers increased. Still, I was mounted; my horse instinctively retraced its former steps; and I was soon in sight of the town-gate.

At the first cry of alarm, the Austrian guards rushed forward, and crossed their bayonets; but seeing only a priest trotting from a disorderly rabble, as fast as his nag would carry him, they fancied the noise arose from some popular tumult, got up against me; and making way for my horse and myself, they made a rush at my pursuers.

The crowd waited for no closer parley, but immediately dispersed. The policeman advanced fearlessly alone; but before he had time to enter into any explanation, I flew

past the gate and bridge, and was soon even out of reach of their fire.

The two ducal dragoons, however, were not slow in taking to their horses, and plunged after me; but I had the start of a few minutes.

The doctor's mare, who, on my first pressing her into hasty service, had not well understood the motive of my hurry, and had trotted almost listlessly over the sharp flints of the town pavement, was fully awakened the moment she heard the heavy tramp of the dragoons' horses behind her, on the dust of the road. She tossed up her head with a snort of defiance, and bounded away with the fleetness of a wild deer.

My pursuers were heavily mounted, and cumbrously equipped; but they dug their rowels into their horses' sides, and kept up in my rear in a tolerably gallant style.

Away, away we went on the smooth road, like three wild huntsmen driven by the whirlwind and storm.

As we darted past the Angel Inn, I descried my good friend Don Gaetano, who stood at the window with the table-napkin tied round his throat, screaming and ges-

ticulating like one possessed, while his jack-ass brayed from his manger in sympathy. I freed myself from my disguisement, unclasped my cloak, and dropped the hat, leaving to the winds the charge of wafting that gear to the feet of its lawful owner.

Away! away!—All the cottages poured forth their tenants, every pedestrian or beggar stopped leaning on his staff, every waggon-driver pulled in his rein to witness the mad race. No one, however, dared to interfere with us, or those who were disposed to throw themselves on our path, luckily enough only thought of it when it was too late.

I might have distanced my pursuers by a first effort; but I bethought myself of the fifteen miles that the mare had already, however leisurely, travelled through, and I was not quite satisfied but that the troopers' horses might in the long run have prevailed by sheer solid strength.

So away I went at a hand gallop. It never occurred to me that I had only to leap over the next hedge or across the next ditch on my left, and dash over the fields for only two or three miles, and thus up to the hills, where those unwieldy war-steeds would

soon have to give up the chase. It did not occur to me, nor would it have been of great moment if it had occurred, for I had a public duty to discharge, and I would have scorned to think of my personal safety. Neither did the idea that I had a pair of loaded pistols at my belt ever flash across my mind. Nor were my pursuers aware, it seems, that they might try whether a bullet from one of their muskets might not have outstripped my courser. The fact is, that the excitement of the chase had absorbed all our faculties.

Away ! away ! it was neck or nothing ; and I had no leisure to look at the scenery. Behind remained Scandiano : behind, also, on my left, Canossa and Rossena ; behind even St. Ilario, through which we galloped, to the sore dismay of its villagers. The dragoons never pulled up till we were in sight of the bridge of the Enza, where the appearance of the national sentinels at the outposts on our own side of the frontier, made them aware that the odds were no longer in their favour.

Without giving much breathing-time to the doctor's famous mare, I proceeded

directly to Parma; and safe and sound, though *minus* a hat, I made my appearance before the provisional committee, laying before them my hard-won booty—the half-torn proclamation of Francis of Modena.

I had not, at the time, read anything about Dick Turpin and his miraculous ride to York on his gallant Black Bess.

Neither had I any knowledge of the strenuous feat of John Gilpin in the same style.

But many a time did I afterwards shake my head as I looked into the pages of Cowper and Ainsworth, and said, with conscious pride—"I, too, had my race."

The tidings I brought were as decisive as they were dismal and ominous.

There we were, alone and defenceless, cut off from our friends, with little hope of effectual resistance or honourable retreat.

Our rulers came to a final resolution. Orders were issued that all who loved their country, all those who considered themselves as *compromessi*, should meet early on the morrow at the citadel, where all our forces should be called together, and an attempt

should be made to join our brothers in Romagna, forcing our way along the ridge of the Modenese Apennines.

The morning, unlike what we had seen for the last five or six weeks, arose overcast and gloomy. At ten o'clock I was at the citadel, and found there about eleven or twelve hundred of our volunteers. They had armed and equipped themselves with the most scrupulous care: they were chosen men—the flower of our youth. The mountain service admitted of no horses. The legion was divided into bands, each sixty men strong, under the command of officers chosen on the spot. I enlisted in the first band—the vanguard—under the guidance of Count Berardi.

Much time was lost. Owing to the want of good management, it was past three o'clock in the afternoon ere the signal of departure was given. The national guard was to march first; the regular troops, with the artillery, and the government, would bring up the rear, a few hours afterwards.

And now there was embracing and kissing, and shedding of tears. Half the town was taking leave, abandoning the other half to

the enemy's mercies. Mothers and mistresses were torn from their heroes' necks, and the column started.

On that very instant, and as if it had waited with us for the "*Marche!*" a tremendous hail and thunder storm broke upon our heads.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COUP-DE-MAIN.

Chi fa i conti senza l' oste li fa due volte.

OLD ITALIAN PROVERB.

THE clouds that overhang the city of London, are privileged to let down one shower at least every day in the year. The clouds that float on the Italian skies, are licensed to pour forth in a few hours as much rain as would suffice for a twelvemonth. Storms in Italy have all the suddenness and impetuosity which distinguished once, and which are still said to characterize in that country the passions of men. Huge dense clouds, in the shape of jagged and cragged gigantic mountains, may be seen looming onward from different quarters of the horizon. They swell, they spread, they tower frowning and threatening aloft, they rush against each other, like rocky masses hurled about in a

Titanic battle. Darkness and silence are cast on the face of creation. Then suddenly, as if at a given signal, the whole atmosphere is rent by blood-red flashes. The whole vault of heaven is turned into one vast sheet of fire, hiding the war of the elements from the gaze of dazzled mortals—and when those fires are quenched, and when the rolling of Heaven's thunder is hushed—the deluged fields, the drowned birds, the scattered foliage and shattered trees, are there to attest the power of the storm, and justify the alarms of awe-struck nature.

There are streets at Naples, athwart which wooden bridges are thrown as across canals and torrents, and there are instances on record, when both these bridges, and men, horses, and carriages, have been swept away by the overwhelming freshet. I remember to have groped my way for several minutes, utterly blinded by a rapid succession of lightning that seemed to have set the very firmament on fire. I have seen trees stripped, split, annihilated before my own eyes, and the bare, splintered, old timber, left there smoking and smouldering as if fire had rained, and not water, and the grass

withered and blackened as if the lava of Vesuvius had swept over it.

Commutations of this nature—the poetry of the storms—will not unfrequently occur on the Lombard plain, where the air is apt to stagnate, like that of a furnace, during the long calm and drought of the summer months; they will, however, now and then visit our land even in the heart of winter; and the continuance of dry weather, which had, quite phenomenally, lasted in the present instance from Christmas to Mid-lent, prepared us for some calamitous reaction.

The storm might, if it had chosen, have taken a more convenient opportunity than to fall upon us on our outset; unless, indeed, the tempest was intended as a sinister omen to frighten us back from our expedition, or as an ordeal of fire and water to test our warlike virtues and power of endurance.

However this might be, it is certain that we marched on in order and silence, with steady and sullen determination. Before we were fairly out of town, our armour and equipments were thoroughly soaked through. The road in the country was turned into a canal, and as we waded through it, many a

hapless wight, anxious to pick his way, slipped down from the foot-path and went souse into the ditch. Above-head there was a sort of Miltonian battle. The frequent pelting of hailstones, and the peals and flashes of Heaven's red artillery, were meant, I suppose, to try what countenance, in case of need, we would put on carnal weapons—volleys of musketry, roar of cannon.

Manfully did we bear through it; no complaint or even a murmur was heard; and the few stragglers that lagged behind, stopping at some of the frequent inns by the road-side, had no sooner swallowed their pint of wine than they overtook us, splashing and paddling through the miry water like a flock of wild geese.

Our road led straight to the hills along the Enza, in the direction of Montechiaro and Traversetolo; and at this last place, twelve Italian miles from Parma, we were to encamp for the night. We had marched for two hours, and only reached Marano, about half way; and the famous *Guardiola* of Castel Guardasone was rising white and airy before us; the darkness of night, hastened by lowering weather, was spreading fast over

the wide level country—when a loud cry of “Halt!” was thundered forth from our men in the rear.

The column halted, of course; and we wondered what new incident had occasioned that interruption, when behold! Professor Pascali came forth, driving his gig along our lines, and delivering a hasty and desultory harangue as he proceeded.

Professor Pascali belonged to our medical school, and was one of the many distinguished men who raised it into high repute. A man with a light head and a golden heart; a native of Reggio, thoughtless, blithesome, ever green, he boasted that he could produce the very best bottle on his table, and have it served too, by the tidiest, liveliest, loveliest Hebe of a housekeeper.

“My friends!—My young fellows!” he exclaimed, with a lusty voice, proceeding from a pair of lungs as inaccessible to cold or dampness as his stout heart was proof against care or sorrow; “back, back, my good friends! Counter-revolution at Parma!—the devil to pay! It is useless for you to go further. They have provided neither beds nor supper for you; this expedition is

a mere trick—the meanest trick to get rid of you ; they sent you off to starve with cold and hunger abroad, while they are accomplishing a counter-revolution at home !”

“ No supper ! a counter-revolution !” vociferated the huddling multitude. “ Back, back to our town ! Down with the brigands ! The revolution for ever !” Tumult and confusion ensued. The leader’s voice was no longer listened to, and such leaders as Count Berardi, had they been heard, could only have thrown oil on the flames ; shouting, yelling, swearing, the disorderly mass moved backwards with a unanimous start. To call the men back to their ranks was now impracticable. Each of us rushed on inconsiderately, with all the speed that the weariness of our previous march and the weight of our drenched accoutrements would allow.

A few words will explain the transactions that had taken place at Parma during the short absence of its revolutionary champions.

The members of our provisional government, as soon as, by a successful stratagem, they had rid themselves of the tumultuous

youths, who rebelled against reason and kicked against necessity, had resolved upon carrying into effect a darling scheme, upon which their hearts were long since set,—that of saving the town from battle and ruin. They wished to spare us the evils and disasters of an Austrian invasion, which, since their hope on the non-intervention had paled, they thought they had not the least adequate means to resist; and they trusted they might avert that calamity by preparing the way for Maria Louisa's peaceful return, by a spontaneous reinstalment of her insignia and orders, by a recall of her magistrates and officers—by delivering into her hands, and recommending to her clemency, her repentant, humbled metropolis.

A similar course was followed at Florence at a later period (1849) by the patriots of the moderate party, whose scheme, though fully successful, was of no avail in inspiring that false and pusillanimous grand-duke with any degree of confidence in his own subjects.

In accordance with these views, our Parmesan rulers had struck the tricoloured standard, dismissed the few remaining companies of stationary militia, marched a bat-

talion of regular troops into the main square, who had been made to resume the duchess's cockade, and proclaimed that the reign of anarchy was over, inviting every good citizen to return to their former allegiance.

Thus would these honest and well-meaning men, out of mistaken charity for their country, have rendered themselves guilty of high treason towards it, and basely betrayed the trust that the suffrage of their townspeople had vested in their hands.

And yet, let not their conduct be judged with unnecessary harshness. Circumstances began to bear an uncommonly dark and gloomy aspect. Piedmont and Naples gave no sign of life. France was ludicrously anxious to assure the world of her pacific intentions. The revolted states of Central Italy were abandoned to their own resources; and against the overbearing might of the Austrian empire what resources were those?

Effectual resistance being altogether out of the question, the alternative was then, between a short, a desperate, but perhaps glorious fall, or a prompt and complete submission. That the latter course must, for what immediately concerned ourselves, have

inclined our sovereign lady to mercy and forbearance, was likely enough. The gratification which that lady would have experienced on seeing herself restored to her glittering apartments, from which not so much as a pin had been removed; the sight of her jewelled toilet-table, of her golden chair, of the famous cradle of the “king of Rome,” and other similar trinkets saved by her out of that great wreck of her imperial greatness—and which the care of our provisional government had duly rubbed, dusted, kept in the very best trim for her—could not fail to plead the cause of the rebels in her eyes.

She might, most probably, feel disposed to look on the whole matter as little more than a carnival frolic; and remembering the day when she was herself at the mercy of her people and humanely used, she would be fain to exercise in our behalf that “greatest and best privilege of royalty,” to forgive.

The line of policy pursued by our government was therefore certainly the wisest and safest; nay, in the eyes of worldly wisdom it was the only plausible—the only possible line.

But ought men who venture into open revolt only to think of safety, always to follow the dictates of worldly wisdom? Have they only homes, wives, and children to provide for? Owe they nothing to their own honour and the fair name of their country? Should we have laid down our arms ere something had been achieved which, even in defeat, would command the respect of our enemy, and call forth the sympathy of mankind?

These are the subjects on which it does not seem to me that I can ever grow old. The whole political theory on which our Italian cause should rest, always seems to me summed up in that single line of the ancient sage:—

“Una salus victis, nullam sperare salutem.”

All chances of success should be made to lie on deliberate despair.

Our rulers had different views; they played, on a small scale, the part of Malatesta Baglioni, at the siege of Florence, in 1830; the part of Görgey, in Hungary, in 1849;—they “betrayed but to save!”

They would have done so, I mean; they had made up their mind—since it would have

been impossible to persuade—then to force their fellow-subjects to submission.

Things had been brought to the point I have described when Professor Pascali, anxious to baffle their plan, had ordered out his gig, and drove after us, to bring us back to the scene of those disgraceful transactions.

As we drew near town, a hasty deliberation took place. The counter-revolution being by that time most probably accomplished, we thought the brigands—by such an appellation each party in Italy designates its adversaries—the brigands would not fail to strengthen their position by manning, barricading, and otherwise fortifying the town walls and gates. All our chances, therefore, lay in the speed and suddenness of our movement; we must come down upon them in the midst of their defensive preparations. It was neither more nor less than a storming of our own city we contemplated; the gates should be taken, and every obstacle overcome at the point of the bayonet!

It often happens thus to men over-anxious to avoid all effusion of blood. Had the provincial government been successful

in their attempt, they would only have substituted civil strife instead of national war.

God spared us this last horror!

It rained meanwhile as merrily and lustily as if it had never rained. The hail and thunder storm had indeed lasted but a few minutes; but there was actually no end to the wintry deluge that followed it.

Under the pitiless pelting of that icy water, we came in sight of *Porta San Michele*, the point at which our storming operations were to begin.

The gate was wide open, a tricolour banner, darkened by the storm, and flapping heavily against its staff, greeted us, though in a sad and drooping manner. There was no occasion for our assault. The counter-revolution had miscarried.

Warily as their plans had been laid, our rulers had undervalued the public spirit of their townspeople. The most fervent youths were absent, indeed; but the populace—now used to all the dignity and importance of *mobocracy*,—the sovereign rabble, whose very existence, here as elsewhere, was hardly suspected in or-

dinary times, but whose energies had for the last four weeks been called forth, was not as easily to be tamed into submission as our crafty statesmen imagined. Accustomed of late to assemble upon the square at every faint breath of novelty, that populace stood a silent but by no means passive spectator of the metamorphosis, which was to turn a rebellious into a loyal, a Guelph into a Ghibeline city. It beheld with amazement the white and red cognizance of Maria Louisa, which far-seeing persons had taken care to treasure up against such opportunities as this,—now solemnly restored to its wonted places, at the entrance of all offices of state. It gazed with stupor upon those very soldiers with whom it had but yesterday *fraternized* over good cheer and honest wine, now marching upon the square with the ducal badge on their shako, with their wonted air of bravado and insolence, striking the butt-ends of their muskets on the toes of freemen, behaving, in short, like the bragging cut-throats they had ever been.

The people of Parma have forgotten it, but the spirit of those doughty burghers, who in glorious republican times routed the

whole host of Frederick II., lingers still, however unconsciously, among their descendants.

Flesh and blood could stand such ill-treatment no longer. The mob set up its tremendous war-whoop; it flung a shower of stones upon those recreant soldiers; it rushed upon them with that headlong plunge of which the 13th of February had been the first rehearsal, and wrenched from them swords and muskets with the same unanimity, swiftness, and ease, that had signalized that former success.

How the routed troops were able to escape the vengeance of their exasperated conquerors, I am at a loss to explain. It poured awfully all the time, be it remembered; the soldiers' muskets could hardly be of service, and the people, who had been crowding the porticos under shelter of the buildings surrounding the square, had in every way the advantage over them. The conflict did not last many seconds, and went off with no greater harm than a few scratches and bruises. There was consequently little time and less cause for exasperation. The victorious mob, with instinctive justice,

turned its wrath from those base hirelings to the rulers from whom the counter-revolutionary orders were issued. They overtook in its flight the carriage that was bearing away the members of the provisional government, forced them respectfully but sullenly back to their palace, where they held them as prisoners ; and adding to their number, two younger, bolder, and more popular individuals chosen on the spot, bade them sit once more at the helm of public affairs, and issue orders and proclamations as it pleased their *mobocratic* majesty to dictate.

They did not think of substituting new men. They were probably at a loss where to find better ones, and felt sure that under their own immediate driving these would go straight enough for the future.

Such is the people !

In the mean time other swarms of the populace went forth to secure the town gates, the citadel, and the prisons. They were as jealous of public order and legality as "their betters." They ferreted out Major Rota, the hapless officer who had led the brigand battalion into the square, and who, it was asserted, had been heard to

order fire against the people. They found him, they dragged him along the streets, they kicked, cuffed, but did not murder him. That ranting demagogue De Ferrari was on the spot; he drew a long dagger, which he would have plunged into the heart of the traitorous major. But the mob wished for "justice;" they cast him into a dungeon at the town-jail, with full determination that he should be fairly tried on the morrow, and then "houseled, appointed, annealed,"—hanged, in short, but with all due form and solemnity.

In the midst of the wild exultation of these heroic deeds we entered the town. The victory was already secured to our own side, and all that remained for us was to allay the fury of the justly incensed multitude. With the heavy rain that befriended us, even that was an easy task. After a short rejoicing and *fraternizing*, the jaded adventurers retired for their night's rest, putting aside all public cares and grievances, and carrying their disappointment and vexation, together with their hunger, thirst, and wet clothes, into the sanctuary of their respective homes.

Thus ended a military promenade, which, from the name of the place we had reached, was known as the "expedition to Marano."

Had things taken a different course, had the good Professor Pascali been less eager and active in setting out after us, before that popular farce had been drawn to a close, and had thus our march proceeded without interruption, we should on the evening have reached our destination, and slept at Traversetolo, soaked through, houseless, supperless, as we had already gone without dinner.

Would our courage and constancy have gone any further? Could we, on the morrow, looking out for refreshments wherever they could be found, have picked and plundered our way across the hilly part of the Modenese territory and pushed on to Bologna ere Zucchi had resolved on the abandonment of that city? and would our timely arrival, especially if backed by our regular troops and our six field-pieces, have infused a new spirit into that unlucky commander, and prompted him to abide where he was?

I had frequent occasions to talk the subject over with some of my friends, then

at Bologna, who assured me that our movement had been announced in that town, and our arrival looked for every moment, and that nothing proved more fatal to their hopes, than their disappointment at our non-appearance.

Providence had decreed otherwise !

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LAST WATCH.

“—— Si fata fuissent
Ut caderem, meruisse manu.”

THE storm which had been accessory to all these momentous transactions, within as well as without our town-walls, never abated till late after midnight. The morning arose calm, pure, and balmy, breathing the peace of Heaven into the hearts of an unquiet people, no less than upon the surface of their ravaged and flooded land.

No tumult of warring elements, no clash of human passions, can resist the ineffable smile of an Italian sunrise. Plunged into the deepest abyss of misery, man only needs to raise his eyes heavenward, to feel sure that all mortal troubles must have an end where they have their beginning; and that evil can have no power above the region of the storms. There reigned a stillness in the

well-washed streets of our sunny metropolis, that neither the rioting of the loosened mob, nor the terrors of the threatened invasion, had power to disturb. People spoke as calmly and softly in broad daylight, in busy squares and markets, as they would have done in consecrated groves silvered by the midnight moon. There was a spell of heaven upon earth; it would have been impossible to rouse a popular tumult on that morning. There was a holy reluctance in every man to grasp the hilt of a dagger or look to the priming of a gun; despair itself could nowhere find a rope for self-destruction.

Thou dear God!—as the Germans say it. Those sweet sunbeams were proof against human evil-mindedness and despondency. There was a hymn in every man's eye—a thanksgiving in every heart; a quiet entrancement of joy that no turbulence of passion could prevail against.

So much for fair weather in Italy!

And when our people finally proceeded to business, it was with that same gentle and resigned calmness that pervaded the whole of creation. The conquerors of the evening

appeared before the much-snubbed and bullied members of government, cap in hand, dignified but respectful, entreating them to lay aside all apprehension, apologizing for their roughness and storminess of the evening, and inviting them to resume the management of public affairs, and to provide for the common safety in that manner that should appear in their own judgment most expedient and opportune.

Government answered, by thanking and praising them, protested that its orders had been either misinterpreted or purposely violated; that whenever an opportunity should offer, every one of its members would give fresh proofs of devotion and readiness to die at his post; but that, as yet, danger was remote and uncertain; the people were, therefore, exhorted to retire to their dwellings, to restore peace and confidence into the bosom of their families.

Thus did fine weather—contrary to what so often happened in Paris—allay the storm of popular fury. The multitude sunk into a state of apathy commensurate to the previous excitement, and the revolution was virtually at an end.

In this state of hollow security a few days were suffered to elapse. Austrian forces crowded all round the confines of our narrow territory. We had them only twelve miles from us, on the north, all along the banks of the Po; sixteen miles from our gates, on the Arda, where they had settled since the occupation of Fiorenzola, and only five on the east, on the bridge of the Enza. The project of leading our forces to Romagna, had been given up as impracticable, ever since the bad result of our expedition to Marano. Francis of Este, now strongly established at Modena, had armed the wild tribes of the Apennine into a lawless guerrilla, under the guidance of their priests, and the appellation of "Champions of the Holy Faith;" and a march along the hills had now become as disastrous as a direct attack upon the Austrians on the plain.

Thus we were shut in, with no retreat, save on our own Apennines, across which we might have marched to Pontremoli and La Spezzia, not without some apprehension of resistance on the part of the Tuscan and Sardinian governments.

Yet there reigned peace and tranquillity;

not actual confidence, truly, but a sort of desperate security. Notwithstanding that flagrant breach of the non-intervention at Modena, men were still fain to cling to that baneful delusion. With all the blind dotage of a stale erudition, they resorted to the memorials of feudal times, where they found that the Austrians were perfectly right to meddle with the affairs of Modena, that duchy having at all times been considered as an imperial fief, and a dependence on the house of Habsburgh, whereas they could by no means extend the same claims on Parma, which had ever been in the gift of the Church, and devolved, on the demise of the present duchess, on the Bourbons of Lucca. They forgot—wilfully forgot—that not only such feudal arrangements, but the dignity, name, and the very shadow of the Roman or German empire, had long since ceased to exist; that Austria had solemnly renounced all sovereignty over the so-called independent Italian states, both in 1745 and in 1815; and that that same right of the strongest, by which she presumed to come to the aid of her ally of Modena, would equally apply to

our own case at Parma, and to that of the Roman provinces.

All men were not, indeed, any longer the dupes of these specious arguments of the non-intervention; but all stood equally silent, as it was indeed difficult for us to do more than to wrap our cloak around us and fall with dignity.

Mutual confidence, disinterestedness, devotedness were at an end. Rampant egotism set up its device: "Every man for himself, and God for us all." The most active and ardent retired in disgust: some to the solitude of their country seats; others asked passports for Piedmont; where they were sure, they said, to meet the French armies hastening forward in vindication of their principle of non-intervention.

It was the evening of Saturday, the 12th of March, 1831, I was seated on a sofa, by the side of one who alone knew how to minister to my heart, sick with disappointment. There were still the eternal old gentlemen at their rubber. The little Mary Ann was throwing her arms round her

mother's neck, for a parting kiss, previous to her going to her rest. It was past ten o'clock — when cries of "To arms! To arms!" reached us, even in the quiet of that silken apartment.

I jumped up, pressed Sibyl's hand, received from little Mary Ann the kiss that was intended for her mother, and in a few seconds was out in the streets.

The whole town was in arms; for the last time—in arms. People were drawing in various groups to the square.

The cause of alarm was soon known. A young militiaman, out of breath, and *minus* his hat, was bawling out a few words to the gaping multitude. He came, he said, from the bridge of the Enza, where he was stationed with twenty others, at the outposts. The Austrians had fallen upon and murdered their sentinel, and taken their quarters by surprise. They were in full march against Parma. He had heard their measured tramp close to his heels, all along his precipitate retreat. They must be at the gate by this time!

"To the gate!—to the gate!" cried the people. "We will all die on the gate of our city!"

Hence they all started; wide and broad as the *Strada San Michele* was, it could hardly be a sufficient outlet for the swelling throng. The *Porta San Michele* was only secured by a lofty iron gate, after the style of the gates of Hyde Park. Two sentinels on duty paced up and down before it with great composure and stateliness: otherwise all was dark, deserted, and silent. The people invaded the vast avenue, and hurried up the broad flight of stairs leading to the high bastions which flanked the gate on both sides.

There was a deep, anxious silence for two minutes; not a footstep was heard; not a bayonet was gleaming through the night.

The people looked at each other, mystified and perplexed.

“It was a false alarm! Where is Gaspari, the raven of evil news? We owe him a ducking for the fool’s errand he has sent us upon!”

With these words, and other worse jokes, the crowd, accustomed to such useless “alarums and excursions,” prepared to disperse.

“One moment — yet one moment, my friends!” cried I, to some of the bystanders.

“It may be a false report, and there is perhaps no danger to apprehend; still, let us make assurance doubly sure. Let the gate be well guarded to-night. Those who love their country will watch with me here to-night!”

The proposal was acceded to; volunteers stepped forward in great number. I was by acclamation appointed commanding-officer at the gate, and empowered to select my men. Other companies were drawn up to be sent as patrols round the circuit of the town-walls, and to man the other gates; the remaining crowd retired.

As soon as silence and quiet were restored, I took possession of a broadsword that lay in the guard-room, called out and mustered my forty companions, and said to them:—

“My friends; this night is supreme for us. I know young Gaspari; and I heard him deliver his news with my own ears. I believe him. I believe that the Austrians have crossed the border, and will be upon us presently. We must keep the gate against them. We must stand our ground, till we have ascertained the nature of the danger that threatens us; and if the enemy really

approaches, give timely warning to the town."

I spoke earnestly; they listened gravely.

"With these few words of mine, I sharpened thus
The mind of my associates, that I then
Could scarcely have withheld them."*

Hence I proceeded to give the opportune instructions.

The night was darker than I ever remember to have seen, before or afterwards; and ears were of greater service than the keenest eyes. I ordered the lamps to be put out, as only serving to expose us, without aiding our sight. I sent for refreshments and wine from the nearest tavern, and thereby restored the strength of my champions, as by my words I had raised their spirits and exalted their virtue.

Good, hearty young fellows! They all belonged to the labouring classes, as too many of their betters had already forsaken the town. They were perfectly unknown to me; but my name and person had of late become familiar amongst them. They were

* *Li miei compagni fec' io sì acuti*

Con questa orazion picciola al cammino,

Che appena io poscia gli avrei ritenuti.—DANTE.

proud to be under the orders of a gentleman, and had full reliance on my discernment and steadiness.

The gate was, as I have said, only protected by an iron barrier, and looked like the main entrance to a royal garden or lordly park. All along the main avenue, there were spacious *trottoirs*; and these were terminated by smaller gates, also of iron, surmounted by an architrave, resting on broad, massive pillars of brickwork. These side-gates served for the admission of the foot travellers.

On each side the gate was protected by the lofty bastions; and the guard-rooms, porter-lodge, custom and other offices, were built alongside the road, excavated, as it were, into the very earth of the bulwarks. These bastions, which were now converted into a public promenade—and under whose old, tall lindens I had spent many a happy summer night—might, indeed, if well lined with artillery, have efficiently protected the gate. But cannons there were none at hand; and the six field-pieces which were in the hands of our regular troops at the citadel—those few who were still with us and for us—

could not be had without an express order from the provisional government. Moreover, to tell the truth, my young artisans and myself were but indifferent artillerymen; and the town-walls at no great distance were in such a state of dilapidation, that horses might almost have climbed them.

Under such circumstances it was obvious that the best chances of opposing the enemy, if any were indeed advancing, would have been to meet them on the open field. No man since the death of our mad duke Octavio Farnese, and previous to the still madder duke Carlo Secondo, now happily reigning, even conceived a notion of making a strong place either of Parma or of its dismantled citadel.

What, then, did I hope or wish? I knew not. It seemed to me that some one should show his face on the gate: that some one should enter his manly protest against the iniquitous violence of the forthcoming enemy—that the Austrians should at least see there were yet Italians who knew how to die.

Outside, the road spread straight across the open, rich meadow-land, wide and

spacious enough (as roads usually are in our plains) to give passage to more than ten carriages abreast. At half a mile's distance the sight was partly obstructed by a triumphal arch, erected—I never knew in what epoch or on what occasion—which our people call “*Il Portone di San Lazzaro*.” Before it came to the arch, the main road was crossed by two branch roads, leading, the one northward, to Brescello and the Po, the other towards the south, to Traversetolo and the Apennine.

As far as the eye could reach, the plain extended in all directions, with scarcely a house or a tree, clear and smooth as a billiard-table.

We stood before the gate, watching. Two of my young volunteers had been stationed on the bastions; another threw himself on the cold pavement, with his ear close to the ground, to catch even the faintest sound.

He had not been long in that posture, when up he started, and with a sudden movement he clapped his hands, and cried out—

“Hark! a footstep!”

And a footstep to be sure it was. The

sound became audible, though only at intervals, waving to and fro, according to the flowing of the still, lazy atmosphere. For a moment we might have confounded it with the thumping of our own anxious hearts; but by degrees it became more and more distinct; it sounded on the hard, dry road like the distant sound of a muffled drum. It was some one running towards the gate.

“*Chi va là?*” cried our man from the right bastion.

“*Amici,*” shouted back the poor fellow, who was not well sure whether the proud national watchword was any longer safe. He drew up to the footpath-gate, and we recognised one of our militiamen at the outposts.

He was admitted: he told his sorrowful tale, and had his leave to go home.

The first news were then perfectly correct. Hungarian infantry had indeed crossed the Enza, and lost no time in advancing.

Presently my man on the ground again jumped on his feet.

“Hark! the tramp of horses!”

And horses, no doubt, were coming. We heard them at several miles’ distance. They came not from the highway; but from the

north, from the road of Brescello. On they dashed, like a charging squadron, and we plainly distinguished the clash of their dangling scabbards.

“Hussars, by Heaven!” I exclaimed. “My friends,” I continued, addressing the young men who were grouped around with staring eyes; “look to your guns. We’ll give them a salute, if there were ten thousand of them.”

The young fellows cocked their muskets, and laid their muzzles on the bars of the iron railings.

“*Chi va là?*” roared our Stentor from the top of the bastion, as the galloping cavalry issued into the main road at about a quarter of a mile from the gate.

The horsemen halted.

Our hearts expanded, even as the pupils of our eyes were dilated and strained in the vain effort to pierce through the gloom.

One of the troopers rode forward alone.

“Open, for Heaven’s sake!” he cried, in a husky voice, as a man who had ridden himself out of breath. “We are dragoons and national cavalry, from the outposts of

the Po. A squadron of Hungarians are riding close after us."

The main gate was thrown open. The horsemen (four only in number, notwithstanding all their noise) were hastily admitted. Still no Austrians were heard, either on horseback or foot.

Presently our long-eared scout stood up amongst us.

"Hark! carriage-wheels!"

"Impossible!" we all replied; "they must be the wheels of artillery."

But no; the sound drew near, too light and easy to be mistaken for the heavy rolling of cannon. The advancing conveyance is descried, winding its way to the gate, dark and ghost-like, like the chariot of Hecate.

"*Alto là! chi va là?*" shouts our sentry on the bastion. The carriage stops—a man alights and walks up to the side-gate.

"For mercy's sake let us in for a few minutes," he said; "Countess Stabili has been taken suddenly ill at her villa, and we come to fetch Dr. Peperoni to her succour."

With all the awfulness of the hour, I could not help laughing when I heard the doctor's name, for it was associated in my mind with

the nocturnal adventure of our ill-fated Farfarello.

“The countess should have chosen a more auspicious time for her confinement, for Dr. Peperoni is not the man to go out in a cold night for a trifle,” said I, as I opened the gate with my own hands. Then suddenly drawing my sword, and seizing the fellow by the throat, “You rascally traitor,” said I, “you are no better than an Austrian spy!”

The Countess Stabili was one of Maria Louisa’s court ladies, and I was not, perhaps, wrong in my conjecture that the Austrians had resorted to that poor stratagem to ascertain what resistance they were likely to meet with at this gate.

That night I acted after the impulse of the moment, and instinct served me instead of reflection.

“You wretch! you brigand! you scoundrel!” I continued, warming up as I spoke; “were I to cut your throat on the spot, you would only have what you richly deserve. Here, my friends! throw this base minion into the *cachot* of the guard-room. Tomorrow, at daylight, we will hang him on yonder lamp-post.”

It was no sooner said than done. The man, astounded by my brusque reception, offered no resistance. I have never ascertained how correct I was in my surmise. The carriage waited for him for half an hour, then slowly drove off.

In the like manner others of our luckless outposts from north and east, arrived at different intervals, and were safely housed. They all had left the Austrians at the distance of four, three, two miles, yet no Austrians appeared.

About midnight all these fugitives had been let in; the road became deserted, and our watch was uninterrupted.

I was now fully aware of the extremity of our situation. I determined to make a last appeal to the patriotism of our city.

I appointed a lieutenant to command in my absence, and I walked to the palace of government.

Our rulers were at their post, seated in the same cabinet where I had repeatedly stood before them, almost always a bearer of evil news. The worst had now come.

They appeared to be busy destroying heaps

of papers that lay in mighty confusion on their table!

“My lords!” I said, “they are coming!”

They hung down their heads and answered not.

“The Austrians are coming, my lords!” I repeated more loudly. “What are you pleased to order?”

“What should we say, my son?” answered Della Costa, with an accent of bitter consternation. “The Austrians are here; it is for them to give orders henceforth.”

“Think again, sir,” I replied; “would you let them in at this hour of night, that they may take advantage of darkness and confusion to pillage the town?”

“My dear Castellamonte!” he said, shaking his head, “you speak as if it were in our power to let or to hinder.”

“I know not what is in your power to do. I know that I have kept them in check these last three hours, and by God’s help, they won’t come in yet in a hurry.”

“Heaven be praised for that!” said Della Costa. All his fellow-governors stood gazing at me with wonder. “We shall have leisure

to destroy a few of these fatal documents, lest they should criminate us or our friends."

The old man then rose and laid his hand on my shoulder. "Thou art a smart lad; why have we not many like thee?"

"How can you know how many brave youths you have," I said eagerly, "if you do not put them to the trial? why should our case be so desperate, gentlemen? *Extremis malis extrema remedia*. Wake up our national guards and ring the alarm-bell!"

"Madman!" interposed Carmagnola, who had not yet spoken; "do you think no man here has a heart in his bosom except yourself? or do you think others only value their life? You are young—have you no mother or sisters?"

I stood silent. Mother, indeed, I had none; but my poor Louisa,—but other beings that belonged to me by blood,—but another infinitely dearer, were now, perhaps, slumbering in happy security, and within an hour they might awake in the midst of all the horrors of a city taken by storm! I shuddered, yet was not convinced.

"The town must not be taken by sur-

prise," I said; "whether for battle or surrender, the town must be aroused."

Having said this, I left them. I made my way towards *Strada Santa Lucia*. I stopped at a well-known door and knocked lustily.

"Who is there?" cried a female voice from the upper floor.

"Pippo Galli," I exclaimed. "Call up Pippo! Tell him Castellamonte wants him."

"My Pippo is not in, sir," cried the mother; "nor has he been in all night."

I walked on; not many steps from that was the house of Count Berardi. There I repeated my summons.

"What is the matter?" bawled the count himself, who had just risen from bed.

"Dress up in haste and come out, count—the Austrians are at the gate."

"The Austrians be d—d!" replied the rude man, "it was all a false alarm; go to bed and be d—d to you, too."

So saying, he closed the window. I continued hammering without mercy, and calling out with all the might of my lungs; all in vain. The count I afterwards learned

had been at the tavern with his boon companions, and had been carried home gloriously intoxicated.

“For the sake of humanity!” cried a piteous voice from an adjoining window, “cease your infernal noise! my poor wife is on her death-bed, and you will scare her passing soul from her body.”

I dropped the knocker and walked grumbling away. “There is no use in losing time from door to door,” thought I; “let us see what the alarm-bell will do.”

I walked to the cathedral. Our metropolitan church has a huge square belfry on the left side of its façade, and on the right, a low structure in the same style, which was intended as another tower to match the former; but, owing to want of cash, never rose above the height of forty or fifty feet. Here dwelt the sexton and bellringer of the cathedral.

The door had no knocker, but I shook it with right good-will. No one answered the summons, and I was about to give up in despair, under the impression that the dwelling was untenanted, when a tasselled night-cap and a well-known cadaverous face with

a stumpy pig-tail peeped out at a little loop-hole of a window.

“Fire! fire! *Campanaro! Campana a martello!* Come out to the belfry and toll your biggest bell for very life!”

“But, *Signoria* (your honour!) I see no fire. Pray, your honour, whereabouts is the fire?”

“Ring all the bells in your steeple, you lazy hound, or I’ll wring your nose off your face.”

“Softly, dear sir,” quoth the man with provoking coolness. “I may ring no bells, you know, without an order from the sacristan.”

“And where the devil is the sacristan?”

“He is sleeping with his housemaid, I have no doubt, near San Benedetto” (at another end of the town).

“Devils and furies!” I cried, in a towering rage, grasping one of my pistols, and aiming it at the night-capped head; “do you crack off your stupid jokes with me? Toll your bells, I say, or I’ll shatter your brains!”

Head, nightcap, tassel, and *queue*, instantly disappeared.

“Toll, bellringer, in God’s name! toll, or I’ll set fire to your hole, and burn you, you old owl, in your nest.”

No answer; threats and entreaties were equally wasted. The fellow felt safe enough in his fortress, and laughed at my impotent fury.

Believe it who may, the thought that there were other steeples and other bells in the town, scarcely crossed my brain. The fact is, I began to feel giddy with prolonged excitement, and was rapidly losing my senses. I gave up all hopes of rousing the city to arms, and returned in a state of distraction to my humble friends at the gate.

I found my friends safe at their post, where, during my absence, they had suffered no further disturbance. No incident of importance occurred till daybreak.

The night had been dry, but slightly overcast, and the thin haze that almost unperceivedly had rested on our still atmosphere, was gradually drifted off by the first fanning of the morning breeze. A few white streaks of dawning light, in the shape of thin and faint comet-trains, gradually dispelled the darkness of night, and enabled us to descry

a huge dense mass, which, occupying the whole width of the highway, was slowly and silently moving towards us.

It was all dark and mute, and its motion all but imperceptible; we might have mistaken it for a heavy mist.

The alarm was given by our sentinels, and we were all under arms.

My men drew up in one line along the wall of the bastion, under shelter of the pillar of the side-gate. I directed them to run up and man the bastions on both sides.

As for myself, I drew my sword, and placed myself in the middle of the road, close to the iron rails of the gate.

No sooner had the large phalanx caught the first sight of us, just as it issued from under the triumphal arch or *Portone*, above mentioned, than it halted and stood immoveable.

They could be no less than sixty or seventy abreast, for the front line stretched all across that wide road, and the men stood close to each other with that perfect order and steadiness for which soldiers trained in the German school are justly celebrated.

They stood immoveable—half a mile from us. And as I gazed upon them with awe

and wonder, I could not help wishing that a couple of broad-mouthed howitzers were levelled against them on the bastions, that we might have the satisfaction, at least, before we yielded, of opening a gap here and there in that dense array, and see a score or so of them writhing and sprawling in the dust.

But our cannon were resting in the citadel, and the bravest of our men away from us, or asleep in their beds.

The hostile mass continued to stand still for about a quarter of an hour, during which darkness gave way before the glorious light of morn.

At last they came to some decision. A few scores of Tyrolese sharpshooters were ordered to advance.

Forward they came with their quick stealthy tread, bowing almost to the ground, spreading in a broad line over the whole extent of the meadows, with a mind, as I thought, to give the walls the escalade and attack us on our flanks and rear.

Four of them—forlorn hopes—marched slowly but fearlessly on the road itself, to engage the battle.

These had not proceeded many rods when they lowered their pieces and levelled them against my breast.

I set my teeth hard; I felt my mouth bitter, and a shiver ran through my bones; for I knew all the correctness of aim of a Tyrolese rifle, and was sure my life hung on the hair-trigger of any of those four.

Yet, God is my witness! I stirred not, shrank not. I gazed steadfastly on the deadly muzzles, waiting almost with impatience that they should pour forth my death-warrant.

It is always Don Quixote, awaiting the spring of the Royal Lion. The parallel haunts me everywhere in spite of myself.

There I stood before the close gate, with a countenance sullen and pale, may be, but unflinching, and my naked sword-blade gleaming in the morning ray.

My young friends manned the bastions, and from the shelter of the parapets, in their turn were ready to commence hostilities.

“Sir, sir, shall we fire?” whispered one of them with admirable coolness.

I did not answer. Indeed, I confess I was

dumb with perplexity. What was I to do? I had only a vague longing that the Tyrolese should take a good aim and release me from the responsibility of a deed of which I could not appreciate the fearful consequences.

But the Tyrolese themselves were seized with irresolution.

At the distance of about fifty yards they stopped; those on the road, right against me, stopped and raised their ugly rifles.

I breathed again!

Perhaps, they felt that few and helpless as we were, we were not to be frightened. Perhaps, notwithstanding their venturous character, they were themselves panic-struck; more probably they wished to give time to their comrades to climb the dismantled walls and harass us in our rear. It is not impossible also that they felt some reluctance to murder a man—apparently a madman—in cold blood.

All I know is, they halted and stood still, and threw their short pieces on their left arms, whilst my friends on the bastions still held their muskets lowered against them.

The huge mass of infantry all the while was seen moving forward at a slow but inevitable pace.

Things were in this state when new characters made their appearance upon the stage.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PARTING.

Lo dì che han detto ai dolci amici Addio.

DANTE.

UNDER the most trying circumstances, in the heart of the most unsettled communities, there are always a set of men privileged to witness public events with unconcern. I do not here allude to those so-called philosophers who are above national calamities ; I speak of humbler beings—so insignificant as to be below them.

There were people in our town who had heard little and knew nothing of our revolution, and who thought of it as of something that regarded them not ; they stared at the more excitable part of their townsmen, at all their haranguing, parading, and drumming, and went on, in their humble avocations, almost compassionately shrugging their shoulders.

The town-gates at Parma are invariably opened at daybreak. Before that time every morning, Sundays not excepted, crowds of fruiterers, milkmen, and others, with carts, donkeys, and baskets, bound on their early errands, are wont to besiege the gateway.

The country people outside were on that fatal morning—March 13th, 1831—arrested in their progress by the slowly advancing Austrian soldiery; but the no less numerous crowd of outward-bound travellers, journeymen, &c., had, unnoticed by us, made their appearance, and stood gazing and whispering in our rear.

The population of the neighbouring district, squalid and wretched, as it invariably is in Italy in the vicinity of the town-gates, were roused from their sleep; half-dressed women and children joined the groups of early risers. They huddled up to the bulwarks, they sneaked along the walls; on all sides they thronged upon us.

They saw the white-clad soldiers outside,—their levelled guns. They understood, considered nothing else. They set up a murmur, half of alarm, half of threat; they bade

us lay down our arms and throw open the gate.

I had the keys in my left hand, never having relinquished them during the whole of that watch. For some time I was deaf to their remonstrances and stood firmly at my post. But as, reassured by the less threatening attitude of the outside foe — those domestic enemies stepped up to me, and would infallibly have overpowered and disarmed me, I turned to them wrathfully, and threw the keys in the midst of them.

I then cried out to my men on the bastions, mustered them up at the foot of the stairs, and shouting out my military commands as if I had a whole battalion under my orders, I marched them off down the street to the market-square.

Here, at the guard-room, I bade them lay down their muskets. I threw my sword on a table in the officers' room, and gave them leave to disperse. The Austrians entered.

Stunned and amazed, I walked from street to street, without any well-determined object.

There reigned a stillness and solitude such as might well befit a Sunday morning in

London. The good people of Parma began to awake and to look out of their windows. Saddened more than surprised at the sight of their long-dreaded invaders, they withdrew their heads, as if eager to shut out the view of those hideous objects. Not a door, not a shop was open. The market-place was deserted, and even the cheerful peals of the sabbath-bells dared not interrupt the awful solemnity of the morn.

All who had not run away were hiding.

What was I doing? What was I to do?

I rambled for more than two hours in the streets, ere I began to feel uneasy on account of my safety. There was a sullen resignation, a blank stupefaction in me, which was partly the consequence of the unrest and excitement of the past night.

That fit of magnanimous despair that would have prompted me to die on the town-gates was not yet over. I would not think of escape or concealment. At any rate, I deemed it inexpedient to go home—where my presence, under all circumstances, could only create needless alarm.

Walking thus at random, I happened to find myself in the neighbourhood of the

University. I entered the palace, and went straight to the apartments of my uncle, the vice-chancellor.

I told him the adventures of the night; and he laughed heartily.

“Castellamonte throws up the keys, and departs. The curtain falls. End of act the first,”—he said; meaning that our revolutionary drama was only on its first stage, and that a march of the French to our rescue, and a European war, must be the inevitable consequence of the Austrian invasion.

And yet he was a cool man, and accustomed to calculate the chances of political events with mathematical accuracy!

He then called for our breakfast, of which I was in no trifling need; then he showed me up to the observatory, whence a most melancholy sight awaited me.

The Austrians, who had entered the town at daybreak, from the eastern gate, were no more than eighteen hundred—a battalion of infantry from Reggio, and two companies of hussars from the Po. But now, about noon, a column of more than seven thousand foot and two thousand horse, with a formi-

dable park of artillery, were coming forward from the western road. It was the delay of this, their main force, which had occasioned some hesitation on the part of our assailants in the morning. Aware though they must be, of our helplessness and demoralization, they shunned a collision, till they felt sure that the overwhelming apparatus of war which they could command, would do away with the necessity of using it.

Forward they now marched battalion after battalion, squadron after squadron, so that I thought there would be no end of them. The heavy tread of the feet and the clatter of the horses' hoofs reached us, notwithstanding the distance and the height of our position. A dense cloud was gathering upon their heads, and, just as they made their appearance, began to let down that cold, drizzling, mizzling rain, which, according to our old Italian prejudice, never fails to accompany the troops of that accursed nation in their march. Mournfully did I gaze on their waving lines, on their streaming pennons, on the green myrtle-boughs that adorned their helmets as emblems of their easy victory. Sadly did I listen to their

neighing steeds, to their braying clarions, and leaned for support against the balustrade of that lofty turret, and lifted up my eyes to Heaven with an aching heart. "Where," thought I, "was the justice of that severe dispensation of Providence? By what sins of ours or of our forefathers, had it pleased God to bestow on those hordes of savage Northerners, so wide an ascendancy of strength and number, to empower them to crush, fetter, and torture the helpless children of a nobler race?"

"Courage! Are all the virtues of mankind to be summed up in the mere animal power of standing up in a line to be shot at? And are the Italians to be eternally punished, because Heaven and earth smile upon them irresistibly, and give life an undue value in their estimation?"

"Love of life? Had I not also survived our disgrace? Had I not suffered the few opportunities of meeting with a noble end, to escape one by one; and was I any better than the common herd?"

As those thoughts passed through my mind, and I looked down on the broad flags of the courtyard below, reckoning the pro-

bable result of a violent contact of my head with them, if I had yielded to the temptation of throwing myself from the spot, I became aware of other spectators, who had stolen in unperceived behind us, and stood rapt in mute contemplation of that martial display.

They were some of my uncle's children: among them my two little mischievous, impish girls—Aurora and Alba.

“Those are *Tedeschi*, Cousin Hubert!” said Alba. “Why, we thought you had made mince-meat of all of them, Cousin Hubert.”

“How nicely their bands thump and jingle, Cousin Hubert!” said Aurora; “and what brave, prancing chargers! what bright, flashing sabres! what nice laced jackets! and what loves of young officers!”

“These are at least soldiers in earnest,” remarked her sister. “Those nationals were shabby, and only good to run away.”

I had not heeded all their crowing and bantering; but now turned to them rather nettled.

“Leave us quiet only a minute, you witches, will you?” said I.

“Quiet!” retorted the spoiled vixen

Alba. “Why, the *Tedeschi* have come to release you. You will have plenty of time for rest now—but, dear me! how pale you look, poor Cousin Hubert! and how you tremble! Do not be afraid, Cousin Hubert! The *Tedeschi* won’t hurt you; they are such nice fellows!”

It was perfectly true. I was as white as a sheet, and shivered all over. It was deep wretchedness—perhaps powerless rage; or, perhaps, cold, exhaustion, and all the consequences of a blank night. I was ill at heart, at any rate; and the inward uneasiness was apparent in my face, and all over my frame, and produced that pallor and shaking which the silly girl mistook for symptoms of fear.

Her remarks deepened by several shades the dark melancholy that had already settled upon me. I became suddenly anxious to shun further observation, went down into my uncle’s apartments, and threw myself on the sofa.

Weariness soon overpowered me, and I slept for several hours.

I issued forth in the afternoon, again walking listlessly about the silent streets,

or resting on the benches of some of the deserted *cafés*.

Late in the evening I resolved to quit the town. I sought one of the many breaches through which it was easy to let oneself down from the town-walls, and unperceived stole out into the open country.

How did the remaining days of March, the whole of April and May pass away to me ?

In bootless, aimless roaming.

I met Pippo Galli on the morrow. He was one of our thousand and one wanderers. He was now on his way to the fortress of Bardi, having understood that Captain Gottardi had gathered together several hundred fugitives, and was bent on defending that impregnable stronghold against all odds.

Towards Bardi, therefore, we set out together. I had, by clandestine means, my trusty rifle conveyed out to me. With that, and daggers and pistols, we clad ourselves in half a mountaineer's, half a brigand's costume, and travelled up to the mountains.

As we drew near Bardi, we perceived we

had gone on a fool's errand. Captain Gottardi had found nothing there but bare walls and rusty cannon; no ammunition or provisions. Seeing no other prospect before him but starvation, he had given up the old rookery, and led his followers along the Genoese Apennines into France.

There I, at least, was in no humour to follow him; so we turned about, and dashed across the mountains, resolved upon finding our way to join General Zucchi, who, we had no doubt, was now fighting the Austrians in Romagna. I was a sportsman and a traveller. Hardly a wolf's path in our own Apennines but was familiar to me.

Away we went, from one valley into another, across the best part of our territory, and the whole of that of Reggio and Modena. We travelled by forced marches, and yet with little progress, compelled, as we were, to avoid the beaten paths, and to take immense rounds to keep out of the way of the duke of Modena's brigands, with whom, we were told, all those mountains were swarming.

Across hills and forests, along rugged cliffs and barren dales, often under the guidance of those mountaineers, we wandered, mostly

by night, under the greatest privations and hardships.

In this manner we toiled for more than one week to get over the distance of little more than sixty or seventy miles. We came down at last to the main road, at Castelfranco, on the Roman confine, so tired that we were fain to bargain for our passage on a heavy-laden waggon bound to Bologna.

New disappointment awaited us there. General Zucchi had left that city several days since, and the Austrians had taken possession of it. Zucchi was in full retreat upon Rimini and Ancona, and the whole country was covered with his fugitives.

At Bologna, no less than elsewhere, that mad illusion of the non-intervention had been cherished till the Austrians were at the very gates. The Modenese fugitives under Zucchi, who, after the fall of their town, had sought refuge among their brethren of Romagna, were well nigh refused admittance. It was thought that by giving free passage to an armed force, a pretext might be offered to the Austrians to violate the neutrality of the Papal States. The government of Bologna contended that Modena

and Parma had only been invaded in consequence of the ties of consanguinity existing between the reigning princes of those duchies and the imperial house of Austria. Such reasons did not equally justify an attack on the territories of the Church; and up to the eleventh hour they deemed themselves safe.

A compromise was finally entered into, according to the terms of which the Modenese were allowed to cross the Roman frontier, but disarmed and disbanded.

With all these unworthy shifts and subterfuges, the Austrians were not, however, to be kept back. They opened hostilities by seizing upon the city of Ferrara. Bologna was thus threatened from the north and west, and Zucchi pronounced its position untenable.

The fall of so large and important a town, was a moral blow to the Italian cause, which no contrivance of strategic genius could make up for. All illusion was at an end; and disenchantment inspired our people, not with the energy of despair, but with a dastardly eagerness to hasten a catastrophe which appeared now unavoidable.

Scarcely three or four thousand men—most of them committed past all hope—were found willing to follow Zucchi in that ignominious retreat. It was the general's mind to fall back on the narrow pass of *La Cattolica*, and hence, if necessary, to Ancona, where he would be joined by the forces under Armandi and Sercognani, and he might choose some favourable ground offering a chance of effectual resistance.

The Austrians were, however, too quick for him. They came up with his rear at Rimini; and there a short skirmish took place, in which the Italians showed a fine spirit, and repulsed the enemy with heavy losses.

But even that success failed to inspire General Zucchi with confidence in his own troops. He continued his backward march to Ancona, and only reached that citadel to find that General Armandi had surrendered it to a papal legate. This put an end to the war.

All these events had either not yet happened, or were not known at Bologna on our arrival there. But we saw enough at Bologna to understand that our efforts had been all in vain, and that the revolution, no

less than the war, had now reached its close. All was terror and consternation. The re-installed papal authorities, in the absence of the main body of the Austrian troops, unable to resort to violent measures, were glad to rid themselves of the many stragglers and fugitives which compromised the tranquillity of the town, and in compliance with the Italian adage, which advises the construction of "golden bridges to aid the escape of an enemy,"* they granted passes to all who applied for them. Most of those fugitives directed their course towards Tuscany, whence they hoped to embark for Corsica or Marseilles.

But I was not yet determined on expatriation. We took our passports for home. We secured places in a *vettura*, re-crossed the dominions of Este in perfect safety on the main road, so great was still the disorder of the restored governments, and were set down in the vicinity of the bridge of the Enza, on our own confine, whence we struck across the country, and stopped at a peasant's house, anxious to put ourselves into communication with our friends at home, and obtain positive

* "A nemico che fugge ponti d' oro."

information respecting public and private affairs.

The news were sufficiently melancholy. Our case began to look desperate. Louis Philippe shook hands with the northern despots, and pledged himself to the maintenance of peace. The affairs of Belgium were drawing towards a happy solution. Poland and Italy were abandoned to their fate. Europe was restored to its former calm—a calm not to be disturbed for full ten years to come.

Charles Felix of Sardinia had died, and his successor gave no sign. “The king was dead—long live the king!” Charles Albert trod in the footsteps of his predecessor. No hope from that quarter; none from Naples. Italy was sinking into its wonted prostration.

The governments of central Italy were firmly re-established. The duke of Modena quenched his thirst in the blood of Menotti and Borelli. The Pope put aside capitulations and all engagements, and his prisons groaned with hundreds of victims.

Our government at Parma had not yet well developed its own line of policy; but sinister rumours were afloat, and devoted

victims were designated in ominous whispers. Not a few of our *compromessi* had already fallen into the hands of justice, and every arrest was a source of new alarms, and sent a fresh set of anxious wanderers abroad.

By degrees, however, that first panic abated, and one after another those that had less reason to fear for themselves, ventured to steal back to their homes.

My good friend Galli could pass unnoticed. By my own persuasion, he gave in to his parents' anxious solicitations, and separated his fortune from mine.

For the next two months I rambled alone. I seldom slept two nights under one roof, not unfrequently found shelter under no roof. I was turned out of friends' houses and even of their barns; often with trembling entreaties, sometimes even with unfeeling harshness. Terror had demoralized our people; made them forgetful of the humane and hospitable feelings so natural to them. Maria Louisa's dragoons, now hastily reorganized, hunted me from place to place; again and again, at dead of night, they startled my family, in town, from their sleep, with unexpected summons, in their

search for my person. My only chance of baffling pursuit consisted in gaining ground upon them by forced marches, in waylaying them by a variety of disguises, misleading them by false reports, and bewildering them by a rapidity of movements, amounting, as it were, to ubiquity. Neither was I alone thus hunted across the country. Hundreds of fugitives were equally rambling far and wide, in vain endeavours to make good their escape. Most of these at last succeeded in either eluding the vigilance, or exciting the pity of the Tuscan and Sardinian governments, or in finding some unwatched outlet, through which they could pass with safety—and were heard of as happily landed in France. Our friends at home, the patriots of all other Italian states, spared no trouble or expense to aid their escape; and before the middle of May, the most fortunate had put the Alps or the sea between them and their foes.

Nearly alone, I lingered still behind. My pride revolted at the idea of flight. The constant success that had hitherto attended my wanderings, inspired me with a rash confidence. The excitement of that vagrant

life was not without its charms for one of my age and temper. An iron constitution, great powers of endurance, love of hardship and peril, and great knowledge of localities, rendered those daily wanderings almost natural. The help of well-tried friends, also, supplied me with endless means of carrying on the war to any length. I might have been thus a bird in the bush for years.

I looked on the exile's fate with all the prejudice of Italian local patriotism. That the sun shone, and the air was vital in foreign regions, I might, perhaps, have brought myself to believe; but I felt that the world had no home—life no charm for me—out of sight of Sibyl.

Sibyl!—there, perhaps, was the key to all the mystery of my conduct; for above two months I heard nothing of her.

I could not listen to the voice of reason; would not yield to the remonstrances of affection; I would not leave the spot where she lived—at least I hovered near it. I was determined not to quit the country without a parting interview.

I must see her.

At ten o'clock, on a Sunday morning, in

May, I came before the gate of Parma. I walked steadily down the main street of *San Michele*, and turned towards the *Piazza del Duomo*.

The persons of my acquaintance stared as if my ghost had actually stalked amongst them. They shook their heads, and drew aside as if there were danger in the mere contact of the arch-rebel.

Austrian soldiers, and even ducal dragoons, not improbably with the warrant for my arrest in their pockets, were occasionally to be met with in the crowd. Some of my adventures in the country had made some noise, and I had gained credit for rare daring; yet my presence in town was something that could be excused only on the ground of stark madness.

And yet there was method even in my foolhardiness. I had well calculated my chances. Backed as they were by an Austrian garrison, the agents of our police stood still in awe of the populace. All their arrests and domiciliary visits had as yet invariably been effected by night: from the ferment and alarm that my very appearance created, they were made aware that they

could not, without great danger, if not of a riot, at least of great popular excitement, lay hold of me.

They watched my movements, and followed me at a distance. But I had evidently taken them by surprise, and they were apprehensive that I might not have ventured so far without the means of defending myself—even if my visit to the city was not a preconcerted signal for a new outbreak.

At any rate I proceeded unmolested. I made straight for Casa Sormani, gained admittance into the reception-room, hence into the very sanctuary of the lady's bower.

I stood alone before the affrighted Sibyl!

There is nothing in the world I would not give to be able to recall to mind, and describe the particulars of that awful interview. But at that time I moved about as if in a dream, and all I did or said comes back to my memory as it were merely the recollection of a fantastic vision.

She rose from her seat, she raised both hands to her eyes, and stood entranced with terror, gasping for breath. Then she gazed at me with a wild glare, laid her hand on

my arm with a convulsive grasp, and shrieked in an hysterical voice: "You! you! you!"

I threw myself on my knees before her. I poured forth the most ravaging, incoherent speech, vowed my life and soul to her, and conjured her to suffer me to die at her feet.

"Rise, for the sake of God's mercy!" she interrupted. "It is all true, then; you are still in the country?"

"Where else?" I asked; "would you, you too, advise me to fly? God is my witness, I cannot! Reflect, Sibyl, reflect to what fate you would doom me. Think of the desolation,—of the humiliation of an exile's life. Sibyl, you? do you bid me leave you and live?"

"Does then your life belong to you alone?" she retorted; then she added with melancholy bitterness, "alas! that nothing should ever cure man of all engrossing self-love! Do you then owe nothing to your God—to your country—to your friends—to me?—Castellamonte, were you not my own? and dare you thus do away with yourself?"

"Say that word again, lady!" I cried in

a wild transport of joy. "It was to hear that word I came here. I may live yet, if you bid me. Say, oh say, that you claim me as your own, that all the rest of my days, all the lingering agony of the wandering outcast are sacred to you!"

"Unfortunate man, what will it avail?" she replied mournfully, pressing my hand; "what am I to you? Have I aught to bestow in return for this unbounded devotion? But, good Heaven!" she suddenly exclaimed, reawakened to a sense of our position, and making me aware that twofold were the sources of her fears,—“waste not your time in vain discourse. Do you know who I am? in what house you are? Behold! half the town has followed you to this door. If you have no regard for yourself—then, for my sake—leave me! God bless you! and may He forgive this hour of anguish you have caused me!"

But my infatuation still continued.

"Nay, Sibyl, you must hear me," I said, with a slow, earnest, deliberate calmness.

"I ask no return for unlimited devotion. You—you are all in all to me—I must be nothing to you. But I leave you never to

see you again. Sibyl, never again! There is death in the thought of it. Yet I am bidden to live—so be it! but only under this condition, that you regard me as your own—that I live only for you. Am I answered?—am I accepted?”

“Away, away, for God’s sake! Insist not, harass me not in these moments of terror. You will hear from me: you’ll let me hear from you. But now, if you love me, leave me.”

“No, no, no! now or never! say the word—am I answered?”

“You are then, ungenerous man—madman—you are mine! I claim you as my own, my best, my only friend. For the sake of Sibilla Sormani, live—to see the dawn of better days. Go!—your life is dear, is necessary to me; and I shall have no peace, shall enjoy no rest, till I hear of your being far and safe.

“And now,” she said, but the words were scarcely audible, for she was clasped to my bosom, and I pressed her with the violence of a first and last embrace. “Now you are answered. Spare me! release me! be off! and so may Providence always watch over

you, as Sibyl's heart and soul will go with you wherever you go."

A few seconds after this I was once more in the street.

With the moisture of Sibyl's tears on my cheeks—on my lips.

I walked across the *Piazza del Duomo* in a state of perfect blindness and deafness, when I was startled by some one who seized hold of my arm. It was my good father, who had heard of my unexpected return, and had run anxiously all over town in search of me.

I threw my arms round his neck and gladdened his old heart, by announcing that I resisted no longer, but was ready to depart at a moment's bidding.

And now we entered into a hasty deliberation. My appearance in town had created the strangest sensation, and my escape required now some management. However, the means of eluding our government had increased in proportion as its severity had tasked our ingenuity. Even among the few who affected the greatest subserviency

to our restored rulers, there were many anxious to deprive them of the means of doing harm. The little stratagem to which I had now recourse, had already been tried twice with success.

At dusk I repaired to the University, and had a long talk with my uncle, till our friend Professor Pascali came to announce that "all was ready." I followed him. We descended a back staircase, crossed two courtyards, and entered that wing of the University Palace which contained the medical school and the dissecting-rooms.

A large hearse was produced, borne by two men, wearing the livery of the establishment. I was lowered into the anatomical coffin, a winding-sheet was thrown over me, the lid was let down, the bier lifted up, and we started.

The funeral convoy—too common a sight and too hideous to excite either surprise or curiosity—for the remnants of the anatomist's work were thus conveyed to the cemetery every evening—proceeded uninterrupted to *Porta San Francesco*. There was the way to the *Villetta*, the public burial-ground.

The town-gate was still open.

“Any contraband goods?” asked the custom-house officer on duty there.

“Nothing but fresh pork, your honour,” quoth one of the porters, with whom that was a standing joke.

“Go on, you nasty cur!” growled the gauger, holding his nose betwixt thumb and finger.

“*Hodie mihi, cras tibi!*” retorted the porter; and with this brief flourish of tomb-stone morality we were suffered to pass on.

At about half a mile from the gate we entered the *Campo Santo*; the coffin was laid down, and on emerging from it, I found my father, who was waiting for me.*

A scene of tumult and outrage was meanwhile acting at Parma. A body of gendarmes had, ever since my first appearance in the morning, secretly encompassed my father's house, waiting for the silence of night, when they might venture to knock for admittance.

* This little episode may perhaps explain the eagerness with which the Austrians inspected all the coffins that left Milan after February, 1853, when they were on the look out for Mazzini. The smuggling out of live patriots by the conveyance of the dead, is a stale trick in Italy.

My elder sister was at this time domesticated with one of her aunts in the country. Our only man-servant had been sent on a message to the very friend to whose house we were now repairing. No one was at home but my poor sister Louisa, with the two youngest children, and a set of chicken-hearted housemaids. My sister had been kept in the most cruel anguish on my account the whole day. The unexpected summons of the agents of the police, their rude threats and oaths, their vain boasts of the measures that had been taken to secure my capture at all events, joined to the real uncertainty of the success of our scheme of escape, spread terror and desolation in our unprotected household. Leader of that nocturnal attack was that Lieutenant Rossi, whose brutal behaviour at the time of my arrest I had too generously forgotten during the short triumph of our party. Nothing could now exceed the brutality of the man. My sweet Louisa underwent that terrible ordeal with the firmness of a heroine. She was the only one of the family that had presence of mind sufficient to enable her to show those ruffianly alguazils all over the

house. But when at last the house was cleared, and the door bolted after them, she sunk on the floor in the passage overpowered. She was laid down with a burning fever, that confined her to her bed for forty days.

So hard had that poor innocent girl to pay for her brother's imprudence!

Meanwhile my father and I struck across the fields, and made our best speed to get beyond reach of the horse patrols, that rode round the town during the night.

Indefatigable walker as I was, I could, however, hardly keep up with my elderly companion. My father preserved still all his unbroken strength, and could, indeed, have outsped many a man in a pedestrian match.

Alas! my poor father! He looked me mournfully in the face during our rapid progress, anticipating the forthcoming hour of parting. He was fond of classical quotations, as all are who have long been estranged from their school associations, and have only a few scraps yet familiar to their memory, and cherish them on that very account. As we drew near the hills, and breathed the balmy air of their spring-mantled vineyards,

he waved his hand round, to show the beauty of the wide scenery below us, and repeated, again and again—

“Nos patriæ fines, et dulcia linquimus arva ;
Nos patriam fugimus !”

How many times have those lines recurred to my memory !

At daybreak we arrived at our friend's house at Oriano, where my father's servant had preceded us.

There were no sobs or tears at parting. My father embraced me with soldierly firmness, and threw himself into our friend's gig, which conveyed him back to town. He was anxious that his absence should be as little noticed as possible.

I never saw him again ! He had since several years been complaining of bitter pains in his chest, which, it appeared, our cold Lombard winters tended to aggravate. Three years after that last parting night, I received one of his letters at Malta. He was dying by inches, he said, and wished to see and bless me once more before he was summoned away ; he hoped, also, for a respite from the milder climate of Malta. A fortnight after-

wards another letter announced his departure from home. For three months I heard no more of him, but stood wondering and wondering on the Mole of Valetta, expecting him at every fresh arrival. A letter from my sister at last unravelled the fatal mystery. My father had set out in November. He had met with cold winds and storms on the Apennines, and reached Pontremoli in a state of utter exhaustion. There he resisted the entreaties and remonstrances of his friends, who, alarmed at the progress of his infirmity, urged him to stay. He would die, he said, in the arms of his eldest son. At Leghorn, on the eve of embarking for Malta, he was taken dangerously ill. No one was there to tend him but mercenary strangers. I never learned any further particulars. All my inquiries at the hotel, to which I was able to track him, were fruitless. He died in the hands of rogues, who, to possess themselves of what he had with him, had him, most probably, laid in an obscure grave in one of the common graveyards!

From Oriano, on the day after taking leave of my father, I crossed the Taro on my

way to France. Once determined on my escape, nothing could be easier than to effect it. I would only have to cross the Apennines, and embark either at Spezzia or Genoa.

The Taro was high and roaring as we came to cross it. My father's friend walked down to the bank, followed by four stout lads, with long beechen staffs, armed with iron spikes at their ends. It is a rough manner they have of fording swollen streams on our hills, and deserves particular description. Those watermen unhesitatingly plunged into the chafing billows, propped their long staffs against the huge rolling stones, and when they had secured a firm footing, lifted me up in their arms. They seized hold of my four limbs as if they were about to tear me to quarters. Joined in a compact group, we thus moved forward, deeper and deeper into the perilous stream. Again and again, as we went, the daring convoy staggered and tottered. More than once the united efforts of the lusty watermen seemed to give way before the overpowering current. More than once their feet slipped from the well-known ford, and we stood in imminent danger of going beyond our depth. The men held on

bravely, however, and in about half an hour they threw me safe and sound on the dry land.

I turned to wave a last adieu to my father's friend on the opposite bank, when suddenly a man, in a mountaineer's garb, who had stood watching our passage across, now stepped forward and took me in his arms.

It was—Pippo Galli!

“I'll tell you what, Hubert,” said the poor fellow, after that strange sudden greeting, “home is no home, country is no country, for me without you. I have tried it, done my best to like it, but in vain. Now, you are going for good, Hubert, your friends tell me. It would be of no use for you to say nay. I'll follow you to the world's end. You shall not leave me behind, not alive!”

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE FORD.

Aprite la porta.—La porta è rotta.—

Fatela accomodare ;

La Regina d' Etruria vuol passare.—

Passerà—passerà—

Ma qualcun ci resterà.

ITALIAN CHILD-PLAY.

LUNIGIANA, or Val di Magra, is a narrow strip of land on the Apennines, a dainty valley, which may well put the most gorgeous descriptions of “ Rasselas ” to the blush. It was too rich and fair, too blessed a region for any mortal monarch to lord it all over. Consequently, in 1831, the King of Sardinia, the Duke of Modena, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, had each their own slice. The upper district belonged to the last-named potentate, and formed a separate dependence of the grand duchy, hemmed in on all sides by the neighbouring territories.

The metropolis of this little Tuscan province was called Pontremoli.

Pontremoli—Pons Remuli, according to some—more probably Pons tremulus, derives its name from a crazy and shaky old bridge in the vicinity of the old town-gate; a rickety concern, which has been rocking and swinging, and would, ages ago, have sunk into the torrent beneath, but for the interference of San Giovanni Nepomuceno, —the bluff Teutonic saint, old Nepomuk, from Prague, there hung in effigy, with his characteristic crown of five stars, and stretching forth his hand to avert the wrath of flood or avalanche, and supply the defect of solid masonry.

Why the good Bohemian bishop, who could not help himself from a fatal tumble from the bridge on the Moldau, should be set up to stay a bridge in its fall, is one of those mysteries of the Catholic Olympus which mere profanes need not attempt to explain, unless it were by reasons analogous to those which appointed the virgin saints, Lucy and Apollonia, to guard their worshippers against all ophthalmic and odontalgic diseases: viz., that the latter had every

tooth in her mouth drawn, and the former both eyes torn from their sockets, pickled, seasoned, and served up at supper, by the inhumanity of heathenish tyrants; and as they have, therefore, no longer anything to apprehend from toothache and sore eyes on their own account, they are, it is inferred, amply at leisure to take care of other people's infirmities.

Thanks, as I said, to the exertions of the saint in behalf of the structure from which it takes its name, that city of the tumble-down-bridge is as flourishing a place as any other market-town in the Apennines. It lies deep in the valley, in a snug hollow, sheltered on three sides, cloaked and blanketed, as it were, in the deep folds of its bold mountain-range. Up to their summits the hills are one vast chestnut and olive grove. The vineyards bloom on the lower eminences; corn-fields and pasture-grounds spread to the south-west, immediately below the town. A few white dots glimmer through the dense ever-green mantling the heights. They are the church steeples of some of the peaceful hamlets of the district; else nothing interrupts the sameness of that

luxuriant vegetation. The very torrents glide or dash down unseen into the main stream of the Magra—unseen, though by their wild rattling crash perpetually enlivening the stillness of their Alpine solitude.

In a humble but snug and tidy dwelling just outside the town, we found ourselves—Galli and I, comfortably settled, three or four days after our unexpected meeting on the banks of the Taro, enjoying the hospitality of a strange personage, named Girolamo Quartin.

Pontremoli had played a conspicuous part in our troubles of 1831, fearlessly harbouring our political fugitives, and by the oddest devices aiding their escape. In all these feats of daring and humanity our host had played the most conspicuous part.

He was a Genoese by birth. He had started in life as a muleteer, and had thriven in that line, owing to his honesty and punctuality, no less than to the inexhaustible kindness, which made him ever ready for a good turn to a neighbour, and the humour which was never at fault, with a hearty joke for every mountain-lass in his beats.

He was now well to do in the world, and

was, as he readily informed us on our first arrival, highly connected, being father-in-law to no less a person than the Marchese Pavesi de Negri, the greatest nobleman in *Val di Magra*.

How the connection had been brought about, it may be long, and perhaps tedious, to say. But as it is in the highest degree characteristic of the manners of the country, I think I may as well give his own version of the transaction, following the recital as closely as possible in his own words:—

Pontremoli is a town of one thousand houses, or, as they say there, “hearths.” Every third house is a wine-shop, or else a nobleman’s palace. Often, indeed, the publican’s oak branch hangs on a back-door, by the side of the patrician’s marble escutcheon,—for the vineyards of the district are a common source of wealth to great and small; and the broken-down lord disdains not to improve his finances by transacting a little business in the vintner’s line, through the agency of his butler or steward, in his own premises.

From one corner to the other of the peninsula, Italy is rich in poor nobles.

Every village and hamlet, especially in the mountains, has its own nursery of these parasitic weeds ;—half-starved counts and penniless marquises, idle, proud, overbearing in proportion to their insignificance. They are the remnants of the feudal families which were driven from the towns and plains in republican times. On their mountain-fastnesses they lingered in silence and obscurity ; they fastened on their vassals like leeches ; they bred like rabbits in their burrows. Together with the laws that swept down their half-obsolete lordly privileges, came the abolition of primogeniture, which raised every branch to a level with the parent stem. Every puny lordling stood up, every inch a lord. When the eldest brother was once reduced to beggary, every cadet of either sex came in for a fair share in the patrimony.

From the remotest epoch in mediæval history, Lunigiana was the stronghold of Italian feudalism. The Mali-spini and Pela-vicini, two kindred branches of the house of Este, were, as their names imply, *Hard-skinners* of their neighbours, and *Evil-thorns* in their sides. But on the earliest decline of feudal power, in the twelfth and thirteenth centu-

ries, the most generous and enterprising—perhaps, also, the most needy—members of those families, had emigrated to the free cities of Lombardy, Liguria, and Tuscany, there to bring their high blood and mettle to bear on the scramble for honour, to which free institutions opened so wide a field ; till by their strenuous exertions they re-asserted a power which ephemeral democracy had wrenched from them. As leaders of the burgher-nobility—*nobiltà-cittadina*—those regenerated patricians held up their heads throughout every phasis of Italian decline ; and their descendants at the present day, the numerous branches of the Malaspina and Pallavicino (for so they have softened down their appellation from its first villanous meaning), enjoy as much consideration as rank and wealth can, in an enslaved country, afford them above the mass of their fellow bondmen.

But a sprinkling of both races, together with other houses of less conspicuous descent, always tarried behind ; clinging to their native warrens on the Apuan hills, with the tenacity of the craven vermin they have been before compared to ; parading their quarters before

the gaping rustics of that primitive district, greeting each other with the empty titles their petty sovereigns doled out to them, and giving themselves airs, as the *crème de la crème*, the elder branches, the indigenous and genuine aristocracy of the land.

Their ancestors' eyries and rookeries on the Apennine crags were too stately and spacious, or else too bleak and uncomfortable for the stunted and dwindled race, and the sinking fortunes of later generations. A sense of insecurity in their isolated position in olden times, and subsequently that social instinct which impels the Italians to huddle together in towns, gradually led the lords of Lunigiana to shift their homes to Pontremoli, where, as we have seen, their mansions, in every style of building since the Flood, in every state of un-repair, rose up in every direction along the straggling main street.

There draining their vineyards to the last drop, felling their woods to the last stick, and grinding their tenants to the last farthing, haggling and wrangling with money-lending locusts, who eat them out of house and home, they laboured hard to keep up what they call "the lustre of their family," a mere

rushlight at the best, which they are compelled to hide under the bushel of a remote insignificant province.

A few of the most thriving do, indeed, contrive to diversify their paltry existence by spending a Christmas or carnival season at Parma, at Florence, at any of the minor capitals, either as a better sort of upper lacqueys at court, or as spongers and hangers-on at some of their namesakes and more than questionable relatives. But the travelled members are rare in the community ; the majority rot on the ground, deprived of that benefit which a change of air has on our mental and moral no less than on our physical health.

It would be long to enumerate the causes which contribute to render this otherwise fertile and happy valley a true Abyssinian retreat, a kind of Italian *Krähwinkle*, a hot-bed of hobbies, of silly old notions, which everywhere else have given way like noxious old weeds under the hasty tread of civilization.

In the first place, the district is literally and materially inaccessible. There is no way into it, or, I should say, there *was* none, for “ we have changed all that.”

The beautiful road of La Cisa, already described, by which Napoleon had made Pontremoli the centre of communication between the Lombard plain at Parma and the Mediterranean at the Gulf of Spezzia, had, at the time we now describe, been suffered to fall into ruin by princes to whom a road was an infernal machine.

The entrance to the valley was, moreover, especially on its more practicable side, guarded by dragons, dragoons, gaugers, and crocodiles, scribes and Pharisees, bugbears of the worst description, stopping the luckless traveller at every corner of the road, such as it was, ransacking his trunks, and rummaging his pockets, in search of salt, tobacco, bibles, lucifer-matches, and other excisable or treasonable matters; vexing, perplexing, worrying him to death with questions and cross-questions, as to his name, surname, and nickname, country, and business, testing the soundness of his opinions on all things in general, and on the government of his or her serene highness, their liege sovereign, in particular.

Of these abominable political turnpike-gates, these lurking-places, where black-

guards in tattered uniforms level their carbines at you with—

“D—n your eyes, your passport or your life!”

no less than ten were to be met along the distance of scarcely as many miles between Pontremoli and Serzana; and we knew it, for we expected to have to thread our way through that labyrinth of confines on the morrow; for the ducal and royal cloaks of those diminutive potentates being made up of shreds and patches of ancient feudal estates, their extreme borders were so miserably jagged and dovetailed into each other, that any man, with reasonable length of limbs, was sure to get over a new frontier at every stride; and if we recollect that no less than six of these irksome station-houses bore the redoubted cognizance of Este, and acknowledged the sway of the duke of Modena, we may easily conceive that the most enterprising tourist, a very Trollope, would give up the excursion in despair.

Morally and physically, thus boxed up in their snuggeries, secure from the intrusion of even English curiosity, forgetting and forgotten, these blessed people built up a universe in their Lilliputian community.

They measured the human race by the only known standard, their own. The highest in their land were the biggest of men. The very Gulliver in their own estimation, was, then, the Marchese Pavesi de Negri.

There are some Pavesi living in considerable affluence at Parma, and there is one Gian Carlo de' Negri at Genoa, an accomplished and good-natured cavaliere. But the Marquis in Val di Magra was *the* Pavesi de Negri. His namesakes in the two above-named towns were new men—things of yesterday—merely irrelevant veins unaccountably straying from the main artery,—but he was the heart of hearts, the stagnant puddle of the life-blood of both families. The whirlwind of fortune might drive mere scatterlings abroad; dry leaves, withered branches, ever ready to fly before the blast. But the good old trunk was rooted to the ground—proof against hurricanes. The strongest inducements to migrate had been held out to him by allied courts. His own father had been called to fill the all-important function of cheese-grater to his Macaronic Majesty. His present Highness of Lucca wished to trust him—the noble mar-

quis himself—with the golden snuffers and extinguishers of the ducal bedchamber. But the Pavesi de Negri used to hold a court of their own. They were in themselves a potentate. Could Lunigiana subsist without the Pavesi de Negri? was not their lordly ascendancy still paramount in the province? were not its interests for ever identified with those of the house?

Thus did the infatuated nobleman reason.

It cost troubles, he might say, and vexation of spirit to keep up the house to anything like its original stand—anxieties of which mere city lordlings had not the faintest idea. They who scruple not to dirty their yellow kid gloves in trade, and to turn a penny out of life-assurances and straw-bonnet factories—little conceive what it is to scrape together one's revenue out of oil-flasks and goat-skins of wine—to get one's own out of the ploughman, wine-dresser, and muleteer's clutches, now the villains insist on having as much right to their day's wages, as their landlord has to their day's work; to drive it into the thick skulls of our Lombard customers, that acid wine makes the coolest beverage, and rancid oil the most

savoury seasoning; to make a stand against free-thinkers and liberals, who cut parson and pope, cry "A fig for the Lent bull," and—the sacrilegious dogs! fry their fritters in lard!

The wonder is, what becomes of half the specie in Europe? The English—grovelling shopkeepers—have got a loadstone for all the precious metals of the earth. They spin, they steam, they fag, they find out new notions of Free Trade and—serves them right—Midas-like, they starve in their wealth.

Money! money! where is all the money of Italy gone to? Here stands a marquis, the oldest in the world, the tallest and broadest in the land, his name the very title-page in the golden book, his coat-of-arms a very menagerie, with half a score granite peaks in the mountains, a wilderness of woodland, lots of dismantled castles, swarms of servants, three hundred and sixty-five windows in his palace—one for every day in the year—and never a blessed *scudo* to bless himself with!

And precisely at this juncture, too, with the *marchesino* coming of age; the son—the

only son—the only possible son ! for, be it understood, the Pavesi de Negri can be no more than two in the world ; have been no more for eighteen generations. His stately marchioness—rest to her disdainful soul !—could hold the lioness's language to all those common sows, the mothers of mankind : “ We breed but once in our life, but then 'tis a lion's whelp is in the straw ! ”

The marchesino coming of age ! The consummation of one and twenty years' longing ; the lordly cub licked into the full-grown brute !

With all the bustle, the scraping and scouring, at the Casino ! Nine-and-ninety tapers on the grand chandeliers ! twenty-one *mortaletti* — three-pounders every one of them—to be fired away on the market-square at sunset, and ices and rockets, and fiddles and ribbons, and fountains running with malmsey !

And in so great an emergency, in sight of so ruinous a lavishness, of such unprecedented largesses, never a poor *paolo*, never a rascally *quattrino* to carry on the war.

Never was noble marquis in a more lamentable pickle. Not an inch of good land un-

mortgaged; not a blade of corn unsold in the grass. Indeed, the most available part of the property had long since sunk into that bottomless whirlpool of expenditure—the family pride. His town-mansion—with more windows, forsooth, than shutters; bald rocks and close-shaven forest-lands; thin pastures on bleak mountain-crests—was all that remained of his ancestral acres,—the mere shell of what had never been the fattest of oysters.

He had no family to provide for, it is true; for his son—whelp as he loved to designate the “heir” about whom all the fuss was made—had been brought up at those aristocratic almshouses, the *Collegio de Nobili*, at Parma, and the regiment *Novara Cavalry*, at Turin, through the interest of relatives, who had presented him with a scholarship and a commission.

But his hall swarmed with all manner of nondescript domestics; his staff of whom, from scullion to major-domo, could vie in numbers and high-sounding-titles with the court of a German non-mediatized prince. Provincial servants in Italy are tolerably well trained to the starving system, which

they see is equally the order of the day with their betters. Still they all cost more than they are worth. All have a back to be decked in the pepper-and-snuff colours of the Pavesi livery : all have a mouth — often mouths—whose cravings are not always to be hushed with the harvest of the half-score Apennine peaks in their patron's dominions.

What of it ? Are they not, most of them, housebred menials ?—children's children of his grandfather's flunkies ? Had not the Pavesi even a fool in their pay ? And would not the noble marquis have one, if there were not already the biggest of fools in the family ?

Nor could all this idle gang suffice to pamper the pompous inanity of the infatuated spendthrift. Horses and hounds, game-preserves, deer-houses, and even a Swiss *châlet* and dairy ;—all that could cause an outlay without the faintest hope of return, was entertained with proportionate magnificence. All the luxuries of discomfort, all that could be found most unprofitable, most unamusing, most incompatible with a man in the marquis's cheerless position : the toils, the burdens, the embarrassments,—all

of grandeur but the substance — must be got, no matter how much at the expense of his peace of mind, of his credit and self-respect.

Nor was it even the yearly expenditure that drew the deepest on his impoverished exchequer. Unbounded liberality, he flattered himself, would command the homage that power exacted in feudal times. The surly boors of Lunigiana must be fuddled into their former allegiance. Christmas and carnival, harvest and vintage, witnessed a yearly course of periodical orgies in the palace-yard. Births, marriages, and deaths, or the anniversaries of such events, were signalized by a *cuccagna* and *corte-bandita* (*Anglicè*, open house, with caldrons of macaroni, butts of wine, riots, bonfires, dancing, profusion, utter confusion). The christening and confirmation, the breeching and coating of the marchesino, had already given rise to noise and waste without limit. But the solemnization of his twenty-first birthday was to outdo all former doings.

The young lord had been summoned home from his winter quarters more than three months ago. He had been paraded from

house to house, and along every lane and alley, in all the glitter of his regimental finery. He had been hailed with blessings from every cottage door as a bonny lad and comely. Expectation was on the tiptoe for something little less than a miracle on his being ushered into manhood; and the fond marquis-father was bent on overshooting the mark of popular anticipation.

By a dexterous stroke of policy, however, he had removed one half of the difficulty of the enterprise. The auspicious ceremony was to be of a public character. From the stately halls and courts of the Pavesi mansion, the scene was to be shifted to the market square, and to the *casino*, or club of the nobles. The lonesomeness of his widowed position happily afforded him a good pretext for excluding the fairest and most ornamental part of the community from his invitations; and the choice of the casino, inviolable ground to any but the privileged few, left no choice to the honest burgesses of the middle classes, but either to join the revelling mob on the square, or give up all participation in the revel.

At Rome, Milan, or Naples, and in other

large towns, casinos have either been abolished, or, like English clubs, rendered accessible to all that can afford the outlay of entrance and subscription money. Thanks to natural good sense, or perhaps also to a sense of utter helplessness and insignificance, the Italian patricians have, in all civilized places, accommodated themselves to their fallen fortunes, and are by far the most affable of all European aristocracy. Endeavouring, some of them, to win by their accomplishments, by their patronage to talent, by popular manners, and by the adoption or affectation of liberal principles, a distinction, which, they are aware, is no longer attached to their threadbare titles, they seem anxious, above all things, to waive all pretensions, and to court admission into, and amalgamation with all that education and good-breeding has raised to their level.

It is only in some unknown nook and backward corner, such as Bagnacavallo or Scaricalasino in Romagna, some paltry castello in the Marches or the Calabrias, some unexplored mountain district as we have described Lunigiana, that casinos are still extant with all the narrow-minded *morgue*

and petulance that gave them rise. It was the boast of the aristocratic lounge called the "Casino Apuano," at Pontremoli, that it had never been soiled by the sole of a commoner's shoe. It was the house of lords of the mighty oligarchy of Val di Magra, and as such only open to every male of a titled family on reaching the years of discretion. Florestano Pavesi de Negri, the hope and pride of our vain-glorious marchese, had not, owing to his absence from the spot, been before admitted. His father resolved, therefore, that his entrance there should be made the subject of an extraordinary solemnity.

The brushing up, lighting, and warming of that revered sanctuary of patrician conceit, the refreshments for the noble peers, and the coarser festivities for the rabble outside, would doom the "happiest of parents" to the disbursement of some thousand crowns. Contractors for provisions had already been appointed and settled with. Malandrino, the one-eyed landlord of the "Crab," and Spungino, the *caffettiere* and *acquacedrataio* of the "Chequers," had already received orders for meat, wine, and

confectionery. The main-spring to set all these wheels in motion, was alone wanting; the marquis being in that sad predicament which his countrymen humorously express by “lacking twenty shillings in the pound.”*

To extricate himself from this irksome embarrassment, he had no resource left but a visit, which he had unwisely put off till the eleventh hour,—a visit to that most dreaded, yet most inevitable of his acquaintance—an unsafe friend, though a near relative, as the English familiarly designate such—a visit to his money-lender, the Genoese Girolamo Quartin.

With a good round sum, fairly come by, and the warm wishes of all who knew him, the veteran muleteer had settled at Pontremoli, a widower now, and with an only daughter, by name Teresina; a Ligurian beauty, black-haired and black-eyed, breathing fire from her pouting lips, like a walking Vesuvius in miniature.

Quartin had settled down as a pawnbroker; but he was a good-natured, a mere amateur usurer. Exorbitantly rich as the retired muleteer was surmised to be, he had

* “Gli mancar venti soldi a far una lira.”

always repulsed the insinuations of those who wished him to become a landowner. His ambition had a higher aim. He made himself the landlord's lord. He did not hang the three golden balls on his shop-door, for he scorned to levy his taxes on the poor. But he opened a bank to the by far more needy aristocrats, whom he heartily despised, and delighted, by his long-withheld relief, to tantalize, to humble to the dust.

Of all the debt-eaten bankrupts among his titled customers, none was so deep in the Genoese's books as our own munificent marchese; none that the usurer held more discretionally in his clutches—none, we must add for justice-sake, he loved to nettle and chafe, to snub and bully, with a more ingenious refinement of cruelty.

Every negotiation for a fresh supply of cash amounted to a positive fight between lender and borrower; for, independent of his own position as a suppliant, the marquis knew that the Genoese had an easy *non-chalance*, a quiet sarcasm with him, which grated on his thin-skinned vanity more than an open deadly affront.

For one of these dire encounters, however, the poor marquis, from necessity, nerved and brazened himself on the morning of the memorable day. He sought for and obtained admission into the redoubted sanctum of the surly Plutus, and stood before him sick at heart with the qualms of loathing and misgiving.

Girolamo's counting-house had all the fantastic look of an old curiosity-shop. It was a repository of antiquity, suits of armour, family pictures, and all the woful pomp, the tawdry nick-nacks of his aristocratic customers. But it comprehended, likewise—and that was extra-professional—a dead and living museum of natural history. The shrieks of a couple of cockatoos, perched on an iron box, for the contents of which his lordship entered a suitor, assailed his ears on his entrance; and a whole tribe of monkeys, jabbering, chattering, taunting, and bantering, if their meaning were known, thronged around him.

Girolamo Quartin fed a legion of pets. His favours were equally shared by oviparous and viviparous. Famed for humanity to the dumb part of creation in his former capacity

of a mule-tamer, he had gained that ascendancy over them which discerning kindness can alone secure, even with irrational creatures. He was loved as he loved. He idolized, pampered, actually killed his "happy family" with kindness; but, by way of atonement, stuffed, spiced, embalmed, all but canonized them when dead. Dead or alive, he treasured them all, addressed them with the most indiscriminate affection.

Still it is difficult, we know, even for the strictest lover of justice to guard against the subtle temptations of partiality; even Quartin had a Benjamin. This darling of darlings was—tell it not to ears polite—a dapple donkey; but then that was a clever, an erudite, a very phenomenon among donkeys.

For so many years a dealer in four-footed cattle, Quartin was deeply conversant with all their manners, instincts, and humours. He had established a gipsy-like understanding with them; talked with, read them. Against the cold-blooded philosophy which denies horses and mules the blessing of a rational soul, Quartin produced, as a practical, irrefragable argument—his ass!

And a monster of abilities, to be sure, the animal was. People who have been at Franconi's or Batty's will think little of his achievements; but the more unsophisticated rustics of Val di Magra stoutly declared that the very devil must be at the bottom of his apish freaks and more than canine sagacity.

In the first place, *Sibillin* (for so his master styled him) would stand and walk on his hind legs like any bear or monkey. He would answer to his name and follow his master better than any mastiff. I am not sure he could not bray out a tone like any German bullfinch; but this was well proved,—that he would sit in an arm-chair or a carriage like any gentleman born.

O ye partisans of the omnipotence of education! Here was a well-disciplined individual of that most obstinate, most stolid of all living species, whom his master had been able to drive in an open gig along the *Strada Nuova*, and *Novissima* at Genoa, in the file of masquerading carriages at the *Corso*, at the close of the carnival season, attired in a Capuchin frock; and the impersonation was so high-finished, the illusion so complete, that there was a terrible row at the

convent to make out which of the brethren had so far misdeemeaned himself as to appear on the Corso on so profane an occasion. True enough, the murder was out in the end, and Quartin had to smuggle himself out of Genoa, beyond reach of the resentment of the outraged fraternity and the vengeance of the police. Still it was a masterly performance; and none who had witnessed the grave and demure behaviour of the strange novice, but must avow that the ex-tamer of mules was fully justified in his predilection for the peregrine genius of his long-eared friend, and borne out in his Pythagorean theory.

The gifted creature was, however, absent at the time, being in fact engaged at a game of romps with the kitchen-maid below stairs.

Some comparative silence being, at last, established among the feathered tribe at the counting-house, the *quadrumane* having respectfully fallen back at a beck from the charmer,—the marquis, screwing up his courage to the sticking-point, thus opened the negotiation.

“ Well, Quartin, *compare* ! How wags

the world with you, gossip?—you have heard the news, have you not?”

“News, my lord marquis?” quoth the usurer. “News, to be sure. New moon 0° 10' 57.” Sol in Capricorn. Horns in the ascendant; slippery times, my lord marquis, for fathers of families?”

“There, there, always at your nonsense! You are aware *this* is the evening, and must have expected my visit. Come,” he added, putting on a bold face, determined to carry his object by storm, “come, I am in your hands; name your own terms. A cool thousand will do my business.”

Quartin looked at the noble lord demurely. He laid hand on the ponderous ledger that stood open before him, deliberately reading out of its pages.

“Marchese Pavesi de Negri, lord of Fivizzano, baron of Nebbiano, etc. etc. — to Girolamo Quartin, Dr.”

“There, there, that 'll do!” again broke out the marchese; “curse the book, and curse its contents. I know how deep I am in it. You know your security. Every acre of land, every brick of my house is yours—but on my word—a nobleman's word—”

Quartin whistled a tune. It was a favourite air he was then imparting to a proficient blackbird.

The wrath of the marquis at this sally of the money-lending wag, was only restrained by surprise.

“Fellow,” he said, “what do you mean?”

“Simply this,” said the fellow; “pawn your nobleman’s word to your peers, with whom it may be current coin; as for me, I would as soon rely on the chattering of yonder macaw.”

“Base-born hind!” insisted the marquis.

“Cool and friendly, lord marquis!” sneered the Genoese; “cool and friendly! I mean no offence. Base-born hinds trade not in noblemen’s words.

“You have said it—you are in my power; but I am mild and forbearing, as the most vicious of my mules will certify. I am more than that—I am magnanimous, and—you shall have the thousand crowns.”

The marquis breathed again.

“Behold, my lord marquis,” continued the muleteer, “I have a daughter. She is clever, well-spoken, sensible; a blessing to

me in my loneliness. She is an angel in the parlour, a cherub in the kitchen.

“ Yet even this paragon, even this invaluable treasure shall I part with for your lordship’s sake.”

The marquis gaped with amazement.

“ For *my* sake ?” he echoed.

“ Hear me out, lord marquis :—Teresina, the giddy thing, is lost to me. I have been at great pains to know what was the matter with her. Dumb brutes speak out plainly enough when anything ails them, but a lass is a riddle even to a mule-driver of five and twenty years’ standing. Not to weary your lordship, I have dived into her secret.

“ Well, sir, she has eyes in her head, and goes to mass of a Sunday—that means she saw, she was seen ; there has been sighing, guitar-strumming, and at last, *cicisbe-ing** underneath her chamber-window. One night, Sibillin, my favourite, had caught the in-

* *Cicisbeo*, *Cicisbeare*, imitative words, from *ci*, *ci*, conveying the sound of the soft whisper of love. *Cicisbeo*, in Italian, means a *beau*, a *gallant*, in the most general sense of the word. It is only the malignity of foreigners that has perverted the term, and construed it into a dangler about married women.”

fluenza, and I could not sleep. I heard it all.

“The gallant is a proper youth—truth must be spoken,—and a well-behaved one. You would never name him the son of his father. But, hang it, my lord marquis, there *is* a father in the case. The boy is civil, off-handed, obliging; the father an old fool, a stickler for rank and birth, and all sort of nonsense. The son has seen the world, and the starch has been properly rubbed off him; the father looks stiff, prim, all-of-a-piece.

“The young spark’s attentions, I argued, can bode no good to the usurer’s child; and, full of that thought, I loaded my blunderbuss, and, by the God above us! I meant to shoot him down like the marten at the door of my poultry-yard.

“Thank Heaven, I thought twice about it. I stepped up to him and had a long talk with him. I have already said it; the lad is a likely lad, and means well by Teresina. He stands in awe of his father, but the young folks are both young, and the mar—the father is not immortal.—Well, my lord,

the rogue must rob me of my child, and right welcome is he to her. I have as good as promised—pledged her to him. Yet a few months, and these poor monkeys and Sibillin is all that will be left to cheer me in my old age.”

The marquis looked sadly perplexed, but an instinctive shudder began to creep through his veins. Had he, indeed, rightly guessed the bold usurer’s drift?

“The cream of the joke, your lordship,” concluded the villain, “will be when his lor—the lad’s father comes to hear of it. He’ll kick and flounder in a handsome style, the vicious old brute, I warrant you. But I hold him, curb and snaffle, secure in my hands, chained like a buffalo with a ring through his nose. I can make or mar him, and, mark you, this evening must settle. This evening his pride meets with its fall, or else he drinks with me a health to the betrothed—long life and wedded happiness—to Florestan and Teresina! You comprehend me, my lord marquis?”

The lord marquis might indeed repeat the question. Did he really understand the

roturier's meaning? His head swam as in dizziness—he reeled and swung backwards and forwards, blinded and maddened.

Gnashing his teeth, foaming at the mouth, he rushed suddenly forward, and the lordly cane glanced in the air.

“Villain, murderer, low-born blood-sucker!” he stammered; but the utterance of these words were a sufficient vent for his passion. The cane fell to the ground harmless, and the nobleman, without further attempt at violence, rushed from the shop.

The evening brought with it discord, confusion, the devil to pay. The gunpowder (the marquis was made to understand) had got wet in the mortars on the first fall of the evening dew. The faggots for the bonfires seemed equally affected by the dampness of the atmosphere. The market-place remained obstinately ominously dark and mute. Mine host of the “Crab” contended that, owing to the terror of the artillery that did *not* go off, every drop of wine in his casks had turned as sour as the grapes in the fable; and the mob in the market-place, affected by the drought, and afflicted with a

sudden sore throat, could muster up no livelier shout, no heartier cheer, than a jarring chorus of crowing, groaning, and hissing.

Avoiding the sight of that shameless, senseless rabble, the marquis stole into the casino through a back-door. Darkness and sullenness equally awaited him inside the house. It was now barely seven o'clock, indeed, and the meeting was appointed at eight. The *Amphitryon* of the night was glad of a few minutes to inspect proceedings. But what proceedings, good Heavens, what preparations! The *caffettiere* of the "Chequers" was as surly and crabbed as he of the "Crab." Heat had, it seemed, proved no less pernicious to the ices within doors, than the sharp frost to the malmsey-flowing fountains without. Every particle of snow had melted, every drop of liqueur in the Maraschino flasks had evaporated, and the reception of the marchesino, however interesting, would most likely turn out a very dry ceremony.

Now in Italy, no less than in England, whatever folks may think to the contrary, the gist of all human ceremonies is in the eating.

Indeed, the "Casino Apuano" with all the *prestige* of its name, was a mere *trattoria*, a better kind of cook and confectioner's shop, with a *bisca* or gambling-hell to it. The magnates of the land met there to treat each other *alla Romana*, that is, each paying his own shot. There was a *restaurateur* and *café* attached to the establishment, and the consumers settled their scores as they could best.

Every chance of a supper, or even of the meagrest *buffet*, was at an end for the evening. It required all the influence of the distracted marquis to prevail upon the ill-humoured beadles to light up as many tapers as would prevent the members from striking their heads against each other. For the chandeliers in the grand saloon were only lighted on state occasions, and the head waiter had not been told who he should look up to for damages.

The representatives of the ruling houses of Lunigiana gradually, meantime, began to drop in. The new candidate was to come last, and his father had directed him to tarry outside till the house was crowded for his reception. Every one of the members was,

as he entered, saluted with the yells of the discontented populace.

Here was traditional devotedness, reverence for rank, gratitude from the descendants of his forefathers' vassals ! thought the poor marquis, as those discordant voices reached his ears. One word had flown abroad. The talisman bottled up in Girolamo Quartin's counter was not forthcoming, and behold the multitude yelled like the hyæna disappointed of his prey.

His own peers did not show much better humour. They cast a suspicious glance round the gloomy apartment, at the bare and desolate sideboard. Why ! had they not been asked to supper ? An air of languor and discomfiture was depicted in their long faces ; some of them had even husbanded their appetites for the solemn feast.

Meanwhile Florestano Pavesi de Negri, the innocent cause of all this distress and agony, had quitted his father's mansion, and was wending his way down the main street.

A liberal education, a free intercourse with the world, a prolonged journey to the north, whither he had accompanied his

Genoese relative, and perhaps natural gifts of sounder sense, had set him widely at variance with his father's obsolete notions. He was nowhere more ill at ease than amidst the tawdry grandeur and pompous dullness of his ancestral dwelling. The father himself was even more surprised than delighted at the prolonged stay of his darling boy in the present instance, unaware of the spell of Teresina's eyes, by which all the wonder had been achieved.

During these three months of the young officer's furlough, the lovers had frequent interviews. Teresina's father was hardly just to her in his panegyrics of her charms. Teresina had a cultivated mind—musical talents—the result of long domestication with her mother's relatives at Genoa. She had a naturally radiant wit to set off those acquirements to ten times their positive amount; and the bewitched Florestano was soon made aware that the low-born maiden might be in every respect a meet companion even for a man of higher pretensions than his own.

How far the young lord, with penury staring him in the face, might also be ac-

tuated by less romantic considerations of the money-lender's position, and of the help that his strong-box might lend to his father's shattered fortunes, need not be here discussed; neither shall we inquire to what extent a malicious wish to inflict the deepest and most incurable wound on the marquis, by inveigling his son into a *mésalliance* with the usurer's child, might have tended to enlist the latter in the lovers' cause, and brought him to enter into their views with an alacrity that exceeded their brightest anticipations.

Suffice it, that the very best understanding reigned between the trio; and that the scene of the morning between the marquis and the muleteer had brought matters to a crisis.

The enamoured youth walked then down the street, but not to the Casino. He stopped before Girolamo's house, and obtained instant admittance.

Half-past eight, nine had in the meantime struck at the club clock. The noble dotard, anxious to keep up the good humour of his guests, went about from group to group, full of one subject—the greatness of his house

and the brilliant prospects of its young representative. He had traced his genealogy as far back as the founder of the family, the first Florestano, and was now winding up by dwelling on the great chances young Florestan had of contracting some splendid alliance with one of the English ladies or Russian princesses, who crowded his uncle's saloons at Genoa.

At last he came to a sudden pause. A vast number of his club friends had now crowded around him, forming a kind of audience, when footsteps were heard in the vestibule.

"Here he is!" exclaimed the excited parent; and with something of the quickness and springiness of his better days, he made his way across the group of his friends, and rushed to meet the new comer.

The new comer stepped forward, all wrapped in his ample military cloak, without removing his plumed shako; for his father had desired him to appear in full uniform. The heavy tramp of his iron heel resounded fiercely on the floor, and his ponderous falchion formidably rattled and clattered after him.

There was staggering in his tread, which

the bystanders attributed to filial emotion. He held his arms stretched forward towards his aged parent, and clumsily enough, truth to say, he hobbled and blundered up to him.

The marquis did not know how far an embrace might be in keeping with strict etiquette; but he stepped forward mechanically, and the two were thus brought face to face.

Suddenly the new member lifted up his countenance from the folds of his mantle: he gazed haughtily round, and broke out into a tremendous triumphant hee-haw!!

It was Sibillin, Girolamo's versatile friend, the phoenix of donkeys!

Whilst the malicious muleteer was thus playing off his tricks upon the marquis and his noble guests, Florestan and Teresina were riding to Genoa, where they were married in the private chapel of the young lord's wealthy relative.

The old marquis's debts were paid—but his heart was broken. He lingered yet for a few years in his ancestral mansion, and was then gathered to his fathers. He was the last of the Pavesi de Negri at Pontremoli. Florestan settled at Genoa.

Quartin's shop, or counting-house, was shut up, and he removed to the country-house, outside the town, where we now found him.

This story, for the authenticity of which the reader must rely on the truthfulness of the honest muleteer, had afforded me some amusement, but I saw with surprise that it had a contrary effect on my fellow-traveller, Pippo Galli.

He hung down his head during the rest of the evening, rapt in meditations of no pleasing nature, evidently ; but as it became late and our host lighted us to our night-quarters, and there left us, my poor friend sat down on a chair in my own room, laid both his elbows on the table, and looked up into my face with great earnestness, saying : "A strange thing, Hubert, this family pride. The marriage of his son was too much for that old marquis ; it hurried him to his grave."

"One fool the less in the world, my dear Pippo," I observed, philosophically. "There are hundred others left yet, I dare say."

“Nay, nay, but you can enter into the man’s feelings yourself, Hubert,” he insisted; “blood is not water.”

“Nor is wine gall and wormwood, Pippo. I say, what glorious Chianti this Quartin treated us with, did he not?”

“Come, come, *you* would not have married the usurer’s daughter, Hubert—not for her father’s wine, not for all his gold, nor, for that matter, would your father have let you.”

I looked at him fixedly; a film fell from my eyes. My old surmises were then correct, and I had read my friend’s mind.

“My father is an arrant democrat, you know. In the matter of a bride, he would allow his son a free choice.”

“That is because he knows you have a proper regard for the honour of the house, and he may well give you *carte blanche*.”

“What on earth are you twaddling about, Pippo?” I said, with some warmth. “You talk of ‘house,’ ‘blood,’ as if we were of the Doria and Dandolo, or, at least, of these same stupid Pavesi de Negri. My father’s elders were mere country gentlemen, you must know; and his own fortunes have

brought him down two or three steps in the world's ladder."

"Yet—yet," he stammered, "reduced circumstances do not affect blood, a *més-alliance* does. Come, you do not mean to say, now, Hubert, that your father, for example, would throw away his daughter on a muleteer's son?"

"Ay, by Heaven!" I replied sharply, "or an armourer's son either, if he were an honest lad, and knew how to wind himself into the young lady's good graces."

That was a stunning blow. All his blood rushed to his face; but I did not suffer him to die of his confusion, and went on, merrily:—

"You ninny, you! you confounded spooney! Did you think I was deaf or blind, or stupid enough not to see you through and through! Did you think I took all your friendly devotion for sterling gold? that I did not perceive how you coaxed the brother for the sister's sake? You love our Louisa! I know it, have known it for the last three years. What of it? Did you expect me to step in between

you two, and spare you the trouble of popping the question?"

The poor youth was still dumb-struck. He stammered forth a confession, laid before me all his long-cherished wishes, doubts, and misgivings; and thawing by degrees, and warming as he spoke, he opened before me a vista of the future, such as no one but a lover could conjure up. He would follow me in my exile; he would watch events: if nothing turned up to give us hope of a speedy return, why, the whole world is a country! My father should also emigrate with all his family,—with that one particular member of it, at least, who was necessary to the schemer's own well-being! His own father, the old armourer, had grown rich in trade; he had no other children, had no other object in life save only the happiness of his only son. Everything, in short, seemed to him practicable, nay, was as good as settled. Nor did I attempt to undeceive him. Louisa, if she had actually no inclination for the gallant youth, had at least a perfectly unengaged heart to bestow. If no objection arose from that quarter, I felt that my

friend's apprehensions on the subject of family pride were utterly groundless. My father's fortunes were shattered past repair. He had personally the greatest regard for this brave, upright, truth-loving youth; and his devotion to me deserved even greater reward than what he craved at our hands.—Poor Galli!

I took the whole management of the affair upon myself; promised to communicate with my father, and even offered to take charge of a letter for the object of the warm youth's worship.

But matters must be put off for a while, at least till we were free from anxiety, and safely landed on French soil.

Heavy rains fell in the night and continued during the best part of the following day. Quartin, who had undertaken to escort us safely as far as Sarzana, advised us to tarry a day or two under his hospitable roof, apprehending that the rainy weather might have rendered the rivers impassable—at least for travellers who must needs shun the common highway. But our youthful eagerness was not to be over-ruled by the prospect

of danger or difficulty, and we set out on that very evening at sunset.

The road from Pontremoli to Sarzana, crosses the Modenese dominions every two or three miles. The governments of Parma and Tuscany, reassured by prevailing tranquillity, and by the more than pacific attitude of France, had agreed that every facility should be afforded to favour the escape of political offenders, too happy if these would but rid them of their presence, and—as they would have expressed it—

“Leave their country for their country’s good.”

The Duke of Modena alone delighted in the exercise of unprofitable cruelty. He had thrown all his dragoons, custom officers, and all description of brigands into the mountains, to watch the frontiers, and bring him as many of his own or his neighbours’ fugitives as happened to fall into their hands. All the track between Pontremoli and Sarzana was crossed in every direction by those ruthless patrols, and as it mattered very little whether they brought their game to their master alive or dead, they were known to have fired on their hapless victims

without even as much as calling on them to surrender.

Had my friend and myself ventured to travel alone over that dreaded district, the chances would have been ten to one of our running straight into the lion's jaws. But the old muleteer, Quartin, had already brought many of our predecessors safely to their journey's end, and he answered with equal confidence for our escape.

He walked steadily before us, not without an uneasy glance at the sky, which was still black and dingy, and threatened more rain, or at the mountain sides, down which the water came with a mighty rush, every rill swollen into a waterfall. Up hill, down hill, across heaths, and woods, we toiled, thick in the ground of ploughed fields, deep through the thickets of dense brushwood, carefully avoiding the beaten track.

We had marched full four hours in this way, when our guide stopped, and pointed to a dark mass of building, studded with lights here and there. What we saw yonder, he told us, was the town and fortress of Aulla. It was our most perilous pass.

Aulla is a lurking place, about half way

between Pontremoli and Sarzana, deep in a hollow, on the right bank of a ruinous mountain stream, which bears the same name of *Aulla* or *Aullela*; it lies on one of the many boundary lines of the Modenese territory, and right opposite to it is Terrarossa, which again belongs the Grand Duke of Tuscany. From Terrarossa to Sarzana, the road was sufficiently clear of danger, and at the latter-named town, we entered definitively the states of his Sardinian Majesty, and might deem ourselves at the end of our troubles.

Our chances of success rested, then, on the result of the next half-hour's achievement.

The previous walk had been toilsome and heavy; more especially as we had felt the necessity of moving on in strict silence. Our conversation of the evening had thrown my friend Galli into a fever of new hopes, which, as he informed me, had allowed him never a wink of sleep. The consequences of that excitement were now visible on his countenance, which bore a look of stupefaction and weariness, with a tinge of dull melancholy in it.

Quartin had jeered him on his "dismal

look," repeatedly, exhorting him to "cheer up and fear nothing." But now it was his turn to look grave. He pointed to the mass of buildings lying in darkness beneath us, and said with half a sigh,—

"I only wish it were low water, and we might cross somewhere below—but God's will be done!"

With this he moved stealthily down the steep. We followed close; we made the round of the place, and stood right on the bank of the stream.

Girolamo Quartin stood still for five seconds on this spot, listening with all his attention, and straining his eyes towards those voiceless habitations.

It was then about midnight. There were lights here and there, dimly twinkling, about the town; one in a hut nearest the bank, a kind of guard and custom-house. There lay the enemy!

"The bloodhounds are asleep, God be praised!" said Quartin. "From men we have nought to fear."

The guards might well sleep. The stream was generally forded at this point; the water not being more than two or three feet deep

in dry clear weather. Usually, also, there was a huge piece of timber, plank, or beam, thrown athwart the main current, to enable foot travellers to get over with dry shoes. But now the water, dark, muddy, dashed past us with arrowy swiftness, rolling down huge stones; and not many yards from where we stood, it plunged headlong into a gulf, against a cluster of great rocks, whence it sent its spray into our very faces. To venture into that boiling surge would have been to rush to certain destruction. Our only resource was the plank which lay still there, spanning the stream, but the water flooded it over; it quivered, it shook, helpless as a reed in those chafing billows, and we expected to see it every instant borne away before our very eyes.

Quartin pointed to it. I looked him confidently in the face, for I knew how far I could rely on the steadiness of my nerves. Pippo Galli shook his head at first, and pleaded giddiness, to which, sturdy and stalwart as his frame was, his head was subject; but our guide offered his hand, and by one glance reassured him.

All this in dumb show. Quartin now

stepped fearlessly on the perilous bridge, and with outstretched hand invited us to follow.

There was a short strife between us two, as to which of us should avail himself of the muleteer's support. But Galli, perhaps, ashamed of that involuntary moment of weakness, insisted that I should precede him ; and as time indeed pressed, I grasped the proffered hand, and in my turn gave mine to my friend.

We now stood in one group on the plank, which swung underneath our weight.

It was a frail bridge, and a slippery one, but the eye of our guide was true, and his foot firm and secure. The plank was about forty feet in length, and its end rested on a large stone, beyond which there was still a narrow streamlet or channel, over which we had to leap. Quartin stopped as he reached the end of the beam, and disengaging his hand from mine, he drove his pointed staff into the bed of that channel, and prepared to vault over it.

Just at that instant we heard the opening of a window from the guard-hut on the bank behind us, and a gruff voice called out,

“*Ferma o ch’ a te brus !*” (Stop, or I fire).*

The words had scarcely reached us, when two or three rifle shots rang in the air.

Pippo Galli sprang up ; clasped me round my waist, with a tight, convulsive embrace ; he lifted me off my feet, and flung both of us into the roaring gulf.

The water went over us, and I lost my senses.

When I awoke, I had a vague consciousness of hard thumps and bruises, with a rushing of water over my head.

Quartin was standing over me wringing his hands in speechless despair ; right above us was a clump of trees ; at our feet ran the stream, dark and muddy ; far up the river, on the opposite side, the citadel and the few scattered dwellings of Aulla were looming ; lanterns or flambeaux were to be seen flitting along the same bank. Our baffled enemies were watching, in the hope that the current might hurl us at their feet.

We were then safe : we stood on Tuscan

* This, in the mountain *patois* : the Italian should be *Ferma o ti abbrucio* (Stop, or I burn thee—blow out your brains.)

ground ; the plank had been washed off soon after our fall ; it was out of the power of those Modenese brigands to do us harm, even had they dared to step out of their own boundaries.

We were all safe ; but my poor Pippo lay beside me, with a gory face, and a deep gash under his temple—dead !

It does not seem that the brigands' rifles, fired as they were at random, had hit him. But he was startled by the sudden report ; and in that nervous fit, he had lost his balance.

Perhaps it was instinct of love that made him cling to me in his fall ; perhaps it was mere self-preservation. Down we rolled together, headlong against the rocks, down into the deep ravine below us.

I was clasped in his arms, and he never released his grasp. He thus came first into collision with the stones, and bore all the brunt of the shock. The next moment we were washed further down, and wafted at last both equally lifeless, to all appearance, at some distance on to the left bank.

Here Quartin had followed and rescued us. My friend's destruction had saved me.

CHAPTER XXV.

FAREWELL.

“ Tremendo,
Ben più assai che l' averla perduta,
Egli è il dir la mia patria è caduta
In dispregio alle genti ed a me.

I PROFUGHI DI PARGA.

FINE days are not rare in Italy, but these days have beheld the finest. It was again on a Sunday, the 5th of June, 1831, at Genoa.

I stood on the quarter-deck of the French steamer *Sully*, bound for Marseilles. We rode at anchor outside the harbour, just off the tall and slender light-house. It was not quite four in the morning. None of the passengers were yet on board, two only of the crew dozed on their watch.

There had been a fresh breeze in the night and the atmosphere was as pure as it might have been on the second day of creation.

Astern of us, in a wide amphitheatre, rose the proud edifices of the marble city. Above, behind, all around, the Apennine summits shot up, bleak and rugged, yet mantled with green moss, up to the most impervious crags.

There was a lull in the gale, a pause in the life of nature, as if the earth held its breath and fell prostrate before the overawing wonders of an Italian sunrise. Not a chirp, not a whisper broke that religious stillness. The solemnity of the day enhanced the majesty of that godly solitude.

I stood alone on the deck of the Frenchman. The companion of my choice, poor Pippo, was left, stiff and cold, in the hands of the trusty muleteer. The last heart-strings were snapped; my foot had quitted its last hold of my father-land. Yet Italy lay there, within reach of my hand. She had put on all the witchery of her paradise smile, as if to put my resolution to the severest test. The fragrance of that vast orange-grove of the *Riviera* wafted on the last ebb of the northern breeze, spread far over the main, blending with the fresh odours of the brine. On the east, along that endless range of coast, forest, and mountain, glowed

the fiery purple of triumphant day. There was neither struggle nor stir. The land of the sun seemed but too fain to acknowledge its sway. Light glided into its bosom as the spirit was first breathed into organized matter. Under such influences I took my last leave of home. From those ever fatal banks of the Aullela I had a slow and sorrowful but uneventful journey to Sarzana and Spezzia. I had tarried a few days at Lerici, in the vain hope that some of the Corsican vessels would take me on board for Bastia. I had at last taken boat there, with the help of friends, crept along shore by night, glided into the harbour of Genoa at earliest dawn, eluded the vigilance of the guard-ship, and smuggled myself into the steam-packet, whose French captain professed to be a patriot, and was prevailed upon, for a consideration, to overlook certain formalities respecting my passport and permit.

Under the faint rustling of that silken tricolour standard, I could now consider myself safe enough. Too safe, indeed, for comfort. The *facilis descensus* deceived me not. I felt all the importance of the irretrievable step. Yet twenty-four hours and I

should awake in a foreign land. I looked westward where the waves glittered silvery, and the mist hung ominously over the distant horizon. The prospect was gloomy.

At no time of my life gifted with any sanguineness of temperament, I quitted Italy with a heart weighed down by the darkest forebodings. My day of hope had set. There was something rancorous, peevish, mixed with the tenderest feelings, in my leave-taking of the land which gave me birth. There was bitter injustice in my deep invectives against its supineness and faint-heartedness. I hung down my head in sullen dejection, as if all the disgrace of our recent defeat were branded on my brow. I quarrelled with the greenness of the earth around, with the brightness of the heaven above us.

“Woe to the man,” I said, “who has lived to blush for the object of his love! I asked no better than to give my life for Italy, and must I give my honour instead? The brutal Provençal, the heartless Frenchman, will greet me to-morrow with withering taunts about my Italian cowardice. Great God! and have I not deserved them? am I not one of the runaways?”

“God is my witness—I had no choice. There was no resistance, no battle-field. Italians conspire, but fight not. Curse them! They give you no chance. The Austrian can never march so fast but he finds himself everywhere forestalled by a dastardly surrender.”

Long years of hard-won experience have since taught me to judge of such matters with more calmness and forbearance. But life had so far been dull and tasteless to me, and banishment could not fail to render it unbearable henceforward. My soul was dark with manifold sorrow, and in my morbid discontent, I quarrelled with my countrymen who had not been willing to afford me an opportunity of lavishing existence in ever so hopeless a cause.

“Behold!” I continued, “France and Belgium, Greece and Poland, have blood to give for their freedom. Successful or subdued, they secure the admiration of nations, the respect of their foes. They qualify their submission by a generous holocaust. Honour is saved when all else is lost, and the invader treads on the patriots’ corpses, with an awe that teaches him mercy.

“In Italy alone, the foe ‘comes, sees, and conquers.’ National disgrace is here unredeemed by one manly deed, and a disdainful soul can find no refuge against it, save in a cold-blooded suicide.”

I repeat, nothing could be more unfair than these strictures upon the conduct of my countrymen. But by an ingenious perversity of reasoning, I anticipated the arguments which would be thrown into my face abroad, and I fretted and writhed on finding them so urgent and unanswerable.

Dark was my soul, and cruel the train of my thoughts in June, 1831, on board the *Sully*. The Poles were still selling their lives at the dearest rate; we had purchased with ignominy a life of desolation and misery. That hour's dark meditation revealed to me the bitterest pangs that fortune had in store for me. I looked all round to the shore, to the deep blue hills beyond which was the home of my childhood, as they rose one above the other, their craggy outlines boldly relieved, and the whole mass distinctly carved in the still deeper azure of the canopy of heaven. Oh! the love of an Italian for the land of his fathers! and now that blind patriotism

was venom to my heart, and I raised my hands to my eyes, and felt that my national name was henceforth a by-word among strangers.

Behind me were home, friendship, and love : before, solitude, dreariness, perhaps, destitution. Yet I regretted, dreaded nothing ; all my faculties were, strangely enough, absorbed in that one feeling of my country's disgrace.

The steamer was to start at eight. The captain had in vain suggested the expediency of my removing to the cabin below. The half-drowsy, half-fretful passengers began to drop in ; there was a heavy thumping and tumbling of trunks and band-boxes, a jabbering and squabbling, storming and swearing. There were stout English tourists, lean and hungry *commis-voyageurs*, two French *Ignorantins*, and a bible-smuggler from Pater-noster-row. A Scottish chieftain, in his Highland costume, with three daughters ; with that, a great variety of travelling caps, wrappers, and parasols. It was, in short, the usual motley crew of a Mediterranean steamer, with the regular complement of

custom-house officers, soldiers and monks, spies, swindlers, and beggars.

The scene was new and ought to have been interesting to me, for my knowledge of the sea itself was limited to a pedestrian excursion to the Gulf of Spezzia, and a steam-vessel with all the life above and below deck was an unknown world.

Yet I stood apart with true Indian indifference. Alas, for the epic of patriotism, for the elegy of exile ! The vulgar gaze of those passengers, their idle clamour and importunate questions, soon pulled me down from the clouds : the bustle, the distress, the *contre-temps* of the groups swarming on deck ; the missing, misplacing, miscarrying of things ; the splash of a luckless trunk overboard, or the swearing of a fat fish-woman of Marseilles, on her being hauled in,—the silly farce, in short, around me, jarred with my tragic mood more than I would have been willing to acknowledge. In less than half an hour the sublimity of my sorrow had suffered a most egregious fall ; and the last bell found me as heedless and forgetful, as sociable, chatting, and obliging, as if I were but one of the commonest species belonging to the

menagerie that howled and yelled around me; as if Adversity had not dignified and set me apart, the moment she “marked me for her own.”

And now the sounds of the last peals died in the air, the vessel heaved up, and was soon puffing against the billows.

The motion started me. The colour instinctively fled from my cheeks, and a chill crept up to my face.

Yet was it not as I expected? The Frenchman had turned his head to the westward and Italy was left in our wake.

Once more I sought solitude. For full three hours I stood riveted to the spot—I gazed in silence and stupor. For three long hours I gazed in utter unconsciousness; not a farewell word escaped my lips; not a thought of regret—not a question as to the day of return. My head was dizzy; my eyes dimmed with the intensity of that vacant stare, but not moist with one parting tear.

I pressed my hand to my heart; a small packet was there secreted; it had followed me in all my wanderings; it had been my talisman against toil and danger. A lady's glove was in it—the same, alas! that was to be hurled

as a pledge of defiance to Italy's foes ! There were letters, by the same hand that had once worn that glove ; those letters, the only solace of my long, dreary vigils at Compiano. That parcel was a last link still binding me to the past. A strange feeling of disdain, of self-abasement, seized me. I would not be comforted. I wished my misery to be complete. Those tokens of a long-cherished—perhaps a reciprocated affection—were still a flower on the exile's path. I would not have it so ; its desolation should be unmitigated ; I hugged my despair with mad jealousy — nothing should stand between me and my evil fate !

I plucked the packet from my bosom, and flung it unopened on the foaming billows. I watched it sullenly as it eddied rapidly away, in the ship's wake, and was borne towards the shore.

All was now left behind. The outcast was at last alone !

On the following morning I awoke in a foreign land.

Are there men, Swiss or of other nations, who die of home-sickness ?

Behold ! I have passed throughout every

stage of that mournful disease. For the lapse of many years I have been a wanderer, and the ties that bound me to my native home have been severed one by one. The images of the dearest beings have waxed fainter and fainter at every stroke of the hour, even as every toll of the bell removed one mile from the fabled mountain of loadstone, the hapless ship that had been drawn and bound to it by magnetic attraction.

I have outlived it.

The time was when I stood for hours and days on the cliffs overhanging Bastia in Corsica, my only occupation being to watch the extreme eastern horizon, where, in very bright days, the faint outline of the Apennine summits would be seen scarcely emerging from the pale ocean mist. The time was when, from the lofty mole at Valetta, I gazed on a Sicilian craft, as it came on with outstretched wings, gracefully stooping to kiss the waves, white as the dove that brought me messages from the paradise of my home.

But all that had an end. The bracing gale of adversity drove me further off, to rougher climates, bleaker skies. Stern necessity

called forth new energies, created a new man within me. Existence was endeared by the struggle it cost. I grew proud of my good self-reliance. There was a new source of unutterable joy in the feeling that, so far as I alone was concerned, I had wrestled with fate and subdued it.

Then the day came when I looked back with shame on the agony of that last farewell. "Would I," said I, "live that weak hour over again? Would I rather never have tasted of adversity, and wallowed in the non-entity of my petty place of nativity, in sight of the Austrians, witnessing the spread of priestcraft, and the triumph of Jesuitism? '*Perieramus nisi periissemus.*' Exile has regenerated me. Let the heavy Austrians have Lombardy; let their brutal countenance sadden the sun in the heavens. While Italy endures it, I too must let it be. Let us rejoice in the meanwhile that one immortal soul has at least escaped them. The world is wide, and God is omnipotent. The sun shines in England, too, though it be but for three days in the year. In this blessed land of freedom a man is born again. Let us repeat it with that greatest of ancient

outcasts—‘ We were undone, had we never been undone ! ’ ”

But even these vain-glorious feelings of self-gratulation were not deep-rooted or genuine. Nothing more indelible than a first love ; nothing more indestructible than a first hope.

Eighteen years elapsed and Italy gave new symptoms of life ; I was once more the sanguine youth of twenty, once more were new dear domestic feelings trampled upon, the most sacred ties severed. Once more the cry “ Viva l’Italia ! ” sent its irresistible thrill through my heart ; 1848 was to fulfil what 1831 had premised ! And I girt on a sword once more, and a new day of hope dawned in the heavens.

Alas ! have I yet fully recovered—shall I ever get over my new disenchantment ?

Once more abroad, though now hardly an exile, from the home of my birth to the home of my choice. Once more a man in a country of men ; free from sorrows of my own, what bitter drops does Providence still mix in my blissful cup of existence ?

What regrets ? What hopes ?

Oh ! who would not die that Italy might

live! Who would not renounce the chance of ever seeing her again, to feel certain that she will once more be worthy of her former destinies?

Alas! poor Italy! Twice has hope towered up to the sky, twice was it dashed to the ground. Must we resign it? Is there in God no redemption? Is there no limit to the depth of thy misery, no break to thy fall?

How many have lived in the very hope that so long bore me up, that still sustains me; how many are daily stubbornly dying in the same faith! To-morrow! to-morrow! Yes, if we could but live to see what the morrow brings!

“To-morrow would have been the first
Of days no more deplored or cursed.

* * * *

To-morrow would have given him power
To rule, to shine, to smite, to save,—
And must it dawn upon his grave?”

THE END.

But, when would not I have the chance
of some great success? I am certain that
I will never regret the choice of my former

friend! I am sure I shall be rewarded
up to the full. I am sure I shall be
rewarded. I am sure I shall be there in
the end. I am sure I shall be there to the
end of the world. I am sure I shall be there
to the end of the world.

How many have lived in the very hope
that so long as they live they shall sustain
and grow strong and daily alighten dying
to the world. To-morrow! To-morrow!
I am sure I shall be there to see what the

tomorrow brings.

I am sure I shall be there to see what the

tomorrow brings.

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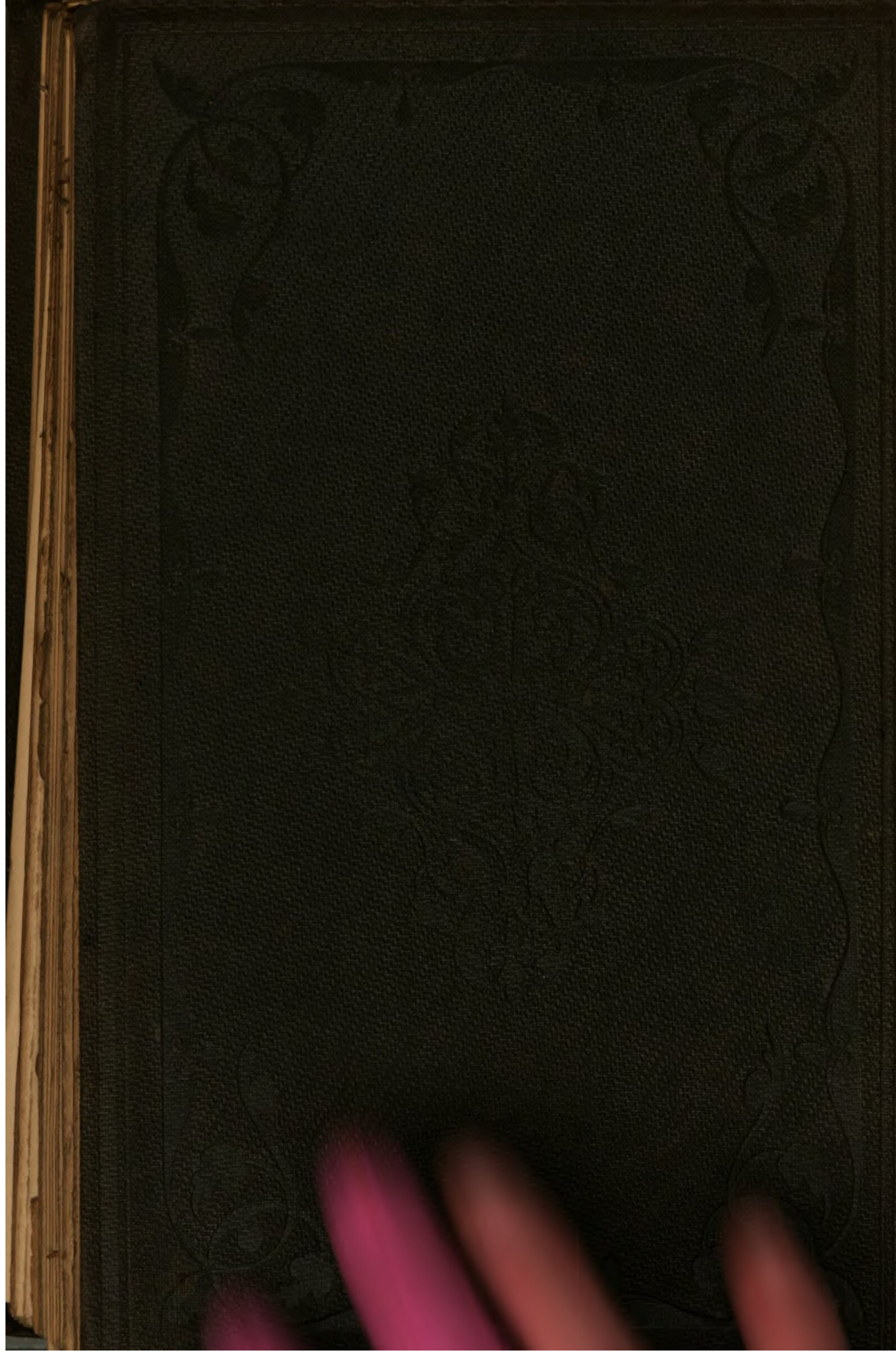
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Gallenga, Antonio Carlo Napoleone,

Castellamonte an autobiographical sketch illustrative of italian life
during the insurrection of 1831

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